INDIEST PUBLISH

☆ MAGAZIN

IN THIS ISSUE

Anthony Zicari
Isaac Cordova
Jamal Igle
Arlen Schumer
Malcom Wong

SNEAK PEEK! Anthony Zicari's

CRIMSON BUTTERFLY

January 2015!

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SELF PUBLISHER MAGAZINE

Well, this is it. The FINAL issue of Self Publisher! Magazine. SP! entered the picture in March 1989, an eight-page mid-magazine-sized collection of leftover information from my involvement with another news zine when I decided to quit working with the person who ran it. SP! took on a life of its own, as I tossed it out there every month, putting forth new ideas and trying new things along the way. People started working on it with me. It is going to be quite an undertaking, but I've started making a list of all the people whose writing has appeared in the magazine over time. Look at it this way; I just finished that info for the current run that started in 2012. Go on; guess how many people have worked with us on this magazine. Take a second.

Okay, fine, you'll never guess. Thirty-two. And that's just the writers... not the number of people we've interviewed or the number of people whose artwork has appeared. So, yes, SP! was not always the name of the magazine. When my first marriage crashed and burned, so did SP! and when I returned, it was as Obscurity Unlimited. But it carried very much the same life of its own and growth exponential. As we moved forward and people came to work with it, we changed names to The Guide to Self Published Periodicals (later shortened to just The Guide). We then reclaimed numbering and name with #50... right when Small Press Idol exploded. Being unable to do both, I turned the keys to SP! over to Eric Hendricks for a bit and he did SP! Nexus. Point being, through every twist and turn... this magazine seems to find a way to keep going and get better.

We're going to land in 2015 with a new name... Indyfest Magazine. I've been doing the logo reveal these last two issues by literally burning away the old logo to reveal the new. We're not going to go back to a #1 issue; numbering will keep going right from where SP! left off. The ideas and structure that we're going to bring to the new zine are going to focus on controlling the growth factor. Inevitably, every run of this magazine has hit a wall of growth, where more people want exposure than the people and pages of the magazine can handle. Either our issues grow too big, which becomes hard for readers to wade through and find things, or we have to cut things, and who wants to be the guy who says what work is worthy of coverage, and which isn't, in a magazine that is supposed to be all about the little guy, the new? Scalability of IM is going to be about articles that start in the magazine, and then flow by link to the website for readers who found them interesting. It will be about getting a system of presenting the new that doesn't hide anyone, that lets readers browse in a fun environment. Indyfest will be about the ability to open up an app while walking around a convention and read about a creator, and then walk up to them and say hi. It will be about keeping our hearts rooted in the rich history of what has happened, while we enjoy what is happening, and look forward to the things that will happen in the future.

But, let's take our own advice and enjoy this issue for what it is, as well. See who is in it, what they are doing, and if it appeals to you as a reader. This is the culmination of 25 years of Self Publisher! Magazine. This is a celebration of right now.

- Ian Shires

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AN ANTHONY ZICARI AND ISAAC CORDOVA PRODUCTION

CRIMSON Suffering™

Setting it out in INK

An interview with Anthony Zicari

By Steven Pennella with Ellen Fleischer

SP!: TELL US ABOUT YOUR BEGINNINGS AS A WRITER.

AZ: Wow! Okay! Well as far as my beginnings as a writer, I guess that would go back to when I was just a little kid, about four years old. I was always an avid reader and I was always creating my own stories and characters at a young age. Whenever I see her, my Mom always tells me stories about how I always told her that I wanted to be a writer when I grew up. It was either that or a baker. She even held onto some of my old stories and writing and she recently gave those items to me. One of them included a newspaper that I had made up, featuring news stories on the Greek Gods and Goddesses. Think like a newspaper for the Gods. From there, as I continued to grow up and progress through school, I always had a deep love for writing and the written word. I would read everything that I could get my hands on and absorbed it all like a sponge. I took AP English classes throughout high school and the rest, I guess, is history. Let me just say, though, that having the ability to do what I absolutely love for a living is truly amazing. I have the absolute best job, creating characters and worlds that, hopefully, touch people in one way or another and open their minds. It is always about challenging yourself to be and do your absolute best!

SP!: WHO IS THE BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON YOUR WRITING?

AZ: These are some tough questions! Well, I guess as far as the biggest influence on my writing when I was younger, that would have to be my mom. She is an artist in her own right. She loves to draw and read and she passed those things down to me. She always pushed me to pursue the things I loved, not for monetary gain, but because it was something I was passionate about and the biggest one of those things was a love for writing and telling stories. Now, I guess that biggest influence on my writing would be my wife. She is always challenging me to be the best that I can be in everything that I do. I have to say that a lot of whom you are and who influences you and what you are capable of accomplishing is about whom you surround yourself with. It's not always someone famous, but they are those closest to you. It is all about your personal support system. They can be harsh and truthful, but at the same time ,you know they are doing it so that you create the best possible finished product.

SP!: WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST PROFESSIONAL BREAK?

AZ: As far as my first professional break in the comic book industry, that was courtesy of Ben Dunn and Antarctic Press, and London Night Studios, way back in 1998 (WOW! That was sixteen years ago!). I was hired to write a four-issue crossover miniseries featuring Warrior Nun Areala and Razor. As I remember, it did fairly well. It was titled: The Dark Prophecy. I think you can still find it in some comic book store and online. These issues hold a special place in my heart, career and on the walls of my home office! Ben

and I are still great friends and we still work together to this day. We actually have a new miniseries project slated to be released at the beginning of next year titled: Science Is Magic!

SP!: HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH BEN DUNN'S WARRIOR NUN AREALA CHARACTER?

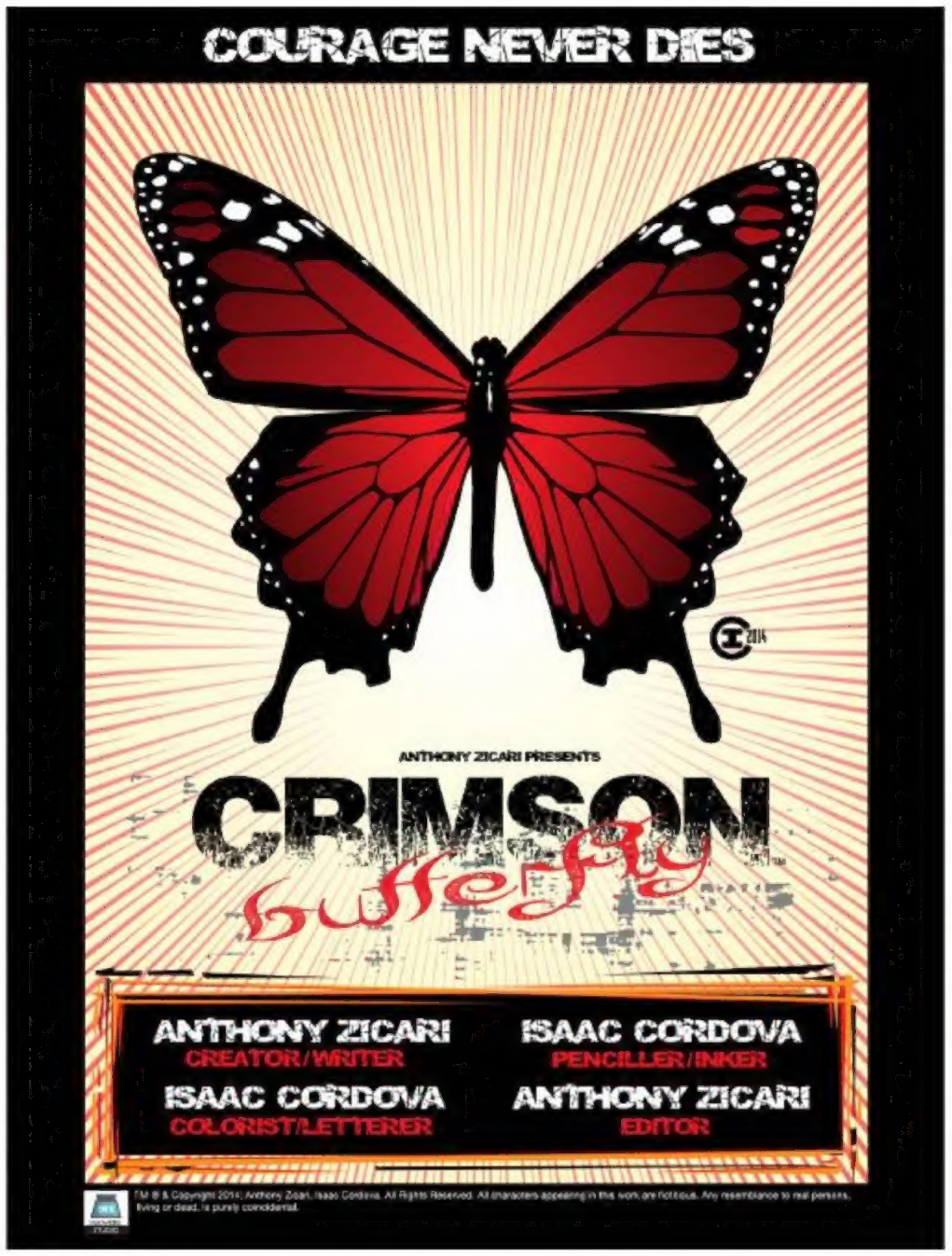
AZ: I had been submitting to numerous comic book companies for years. Going back to 1984, I was thirteen and these were submissions typed on an old typewriter or handwritten, then snail-mailed. There was no email or internet at that time. Jump ahead a number of years and, as I continued to submit to all of these companies, the comic book industry expanded into the small press and independent arenas. As well, new opportunities to connect with comic book professional began to open with the beginning of the internet and the ability to submit electronically and through email. Seeing a new opportunity for submitting, I started reaching out to these smaller companies. One of them was Antarctic Press and I was able to make contact with Ben. As I continued to submit, he saw something within my writing. He was actually solely instrumental in my getting that first professional break on the four-issue crossover miniseries between Warrior Nun Areala (Antarctic Press) and Razor (London Night Studios). As a result of the success of that miniseries, I was offered the opportunity to write the ongoing adventures of Warrior Nun Areala at Antarctic Press. It is still something that I am extremely proud of! I wish I could revisit the character, since I have so many untold adventures!

SP!: HOW DID THIS WORK INFLUENCE YOUR PROGRESSION AS A WRITER?

AZ: I feel strongly that my work on Warrior Nun Areala helped me to progress further as a writer, because I am always striving to do my best. I mean, looking back at some of those stories and re-reading them, I notice things that I would do differently now. But you can't go back and change those things, you just have to learn from them and apply that lesson to whatever you write next. It is always about learning and adapting and growing as a writer and a creator. If you stop progressing, your work becomes stagnant and you lose that passion, that spark, which spurred you in the first place. Everything you work on helps you to progress to the next step in your process as a writer. You are always building on what you did in the past, standing on your own shoulders, so to speak, as you continue into the future.

SP!: INKWERK STUDIOS IS CREATING A LOT OF CONTENT IN DIFFERENT GENRES. LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR CURRENT PROJECTS. CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR GRAPHIC NOVEL, EMPYREAL: THE LEGEND OF JIN HU?

AZ: Sure! It would be my pleasure. EMPYREAL is our 132-page



signature graphic novel. This is a project that I am especially proud of. There was a lot of research that was necessary and it deals with and delves deeply into Chinese history, mythology and zodiac.

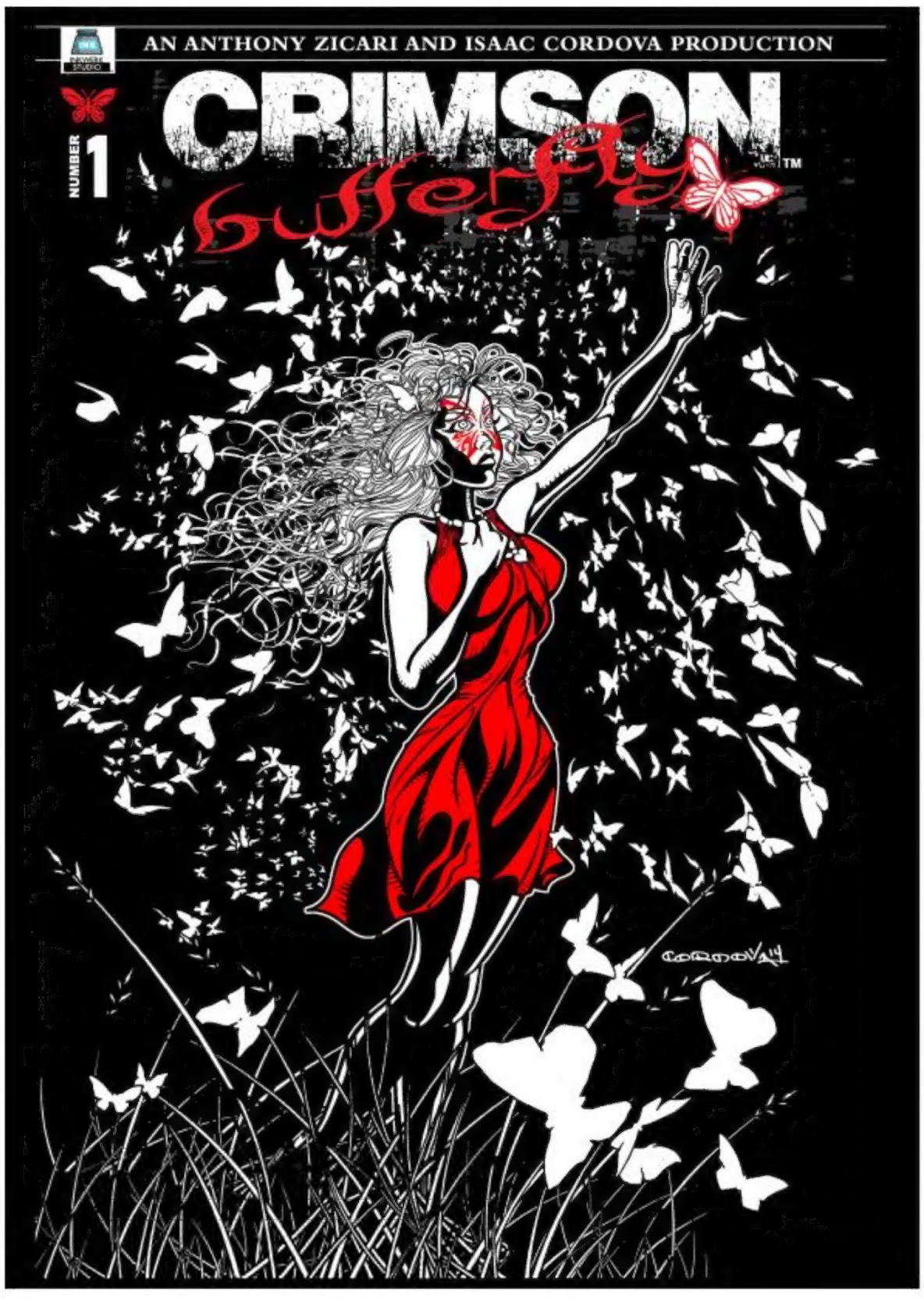
The protagonist of Empyreal is Jin Hu. Only months old, Jin was left on the steps of the Hao Yun Orphanage, located in the town of Fuzhou, in the Fujian Province. He was left with only a gold amulet containing a picture of his mother inside and a note asking the orphanage to care for Jin and the amulet. Jin lived the first seven years of his life in the orphanage and on one fateful winter night, a lone marauder, the mythical and pure evil Zhenyang Liang (red eyes) razed the orphanage, burning it to the ground and murdering everyone inside. Before he was done, Zhenyang Liang stole Jin's amulet and left him for dead. In truth Zhenyang, is the human form of the demon Yao Mo Jin, Empyreal's antagonist. Recovered from the ashes by Shang, a traveling monk, Jin was the sole survivor of this culling. Shang nursed Jin back to health on the way back to Fujian Temple. Once there, Shang raised Jin like a son and trained him in the art of tiger-style kung-fu.

As our story begins, Jin, now 21, is a troubled soul. He is restless with questions about his past—who is he, where did he come from, and what is his purpose in life? He still remembers the burning red eyes of the marauder Zhenyang Liang. Jin needs

answers. He needs to know why Hao Yun Orphanage was targeted, where is the man responsible for destroying the orphanage, and why has no one seen him for the past 13 years? What happened to his locket and who are his parents? Finding the answers to these questions is his objective as Jin sets off from Fujian Temple, located in the foothills of the Wuyi Mountains. Join us, as we follow Jin on a journey that takes him to the lowest depths of hell and into the heights of heaven. Enter as Jin will, into the world of EMPYREAL.

SP!: I HAVE TO SAY, AFTER READING THE SYNOPSIS AND VIEWING THE PREVIEW ART, ON YOUR WEBSITE I IMMEDIATELY THOUGHT THIS STORY IS BEGGING TO BE FILMED BY TSUI HARK. WERE YOU AT ALL INFLUENCED BY CHINESE CINEMA?

AZ: Thanks for that! Glad to hear that you immediately went in that direction! It means we as creators have done our job correctly. I agree with you and I am sure that many other people would as well. To answer your question, though, absolutely! I was definitely influenced by Chinese cinema while working on this project; films such as Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; House of Flying Daggers; countless martial arts films (too many to list them all here), and other Chinese cinema. This project definitely lends itself to the cinematic experience. It has that epic scope to it.



SP!: THE ARTWORK HAS AN IMAGE COMICS FROM TOP COW LOOK AND A BIT OF A MARK SILVESTRI INFLUENCE. WAS IT A CONSCIOUS DECISION TO GIVE THE ART AN AMERICAN GRAPHIC NOVEL LOOK, VERSUS ASIAN COMIC OR MANGA FLAIR?

AZ: No, to be perfectly honest, we were actually just looking for a professional artist and someone that was a good fit for the project. We didn't consciously go into it saying we want an artist that draws like xyz or anything like that. Something that we strive for at Inkwerk Studios is putting forward our absolute best quality work in everything we do. We strive to release the kind of work that can rival work from any other top company/studio in the industry. As a result, we found Edu Francisco. He is a top-notch artist. He has done work for Aspen, DC Comics, and many others. If you haven't heard of him before, look him up on Facebook and remember his name! He's destined for great things. He brought in some other people, such as colorist Sunny Gho from Imaginary Friends Studios. He has done coloring for Top Cow comics, which might be why you noticed the similarities with, and influences of, Top Cow and Marc Silvestri.

SP!: WISH, THE TEARS OF THE CHERUBS, LITTLE SOLDIERS... THESE TITLES FEATURE CHILDREN PLACED IN EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES. WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR LITERARY INFLUENCES WHEN IT COMES TO WRITING ABOUT CHILDREN? ARE YOUR CHARACTERS AT ALL INFLUENCED BY CHILDREN YOU KNOW IN REAL LIFE (E.G. NIECES, NEPHEWS, COUSINS, YOUR KIDS OR CHILDREN OF FRIENDS)?

AZ: As far as some of my literary influences when it comes to writing about children, definitely the Grimm Fairytale stories, which strongly feature children in many of the tales; Aesop's Fables; William Golding (writer of Lord of the Flies), and many others.

In regard to the second part of your question, yes! Absolutely! My characters are sometimes influenced by children that I know in real life. I mean, it depends on the story, the characters and where they are ultimately destined to go through the story. Whether

they are friends from when I was a kid or people who I know currently. I also feel like I put a lot of myself into all of my characters as well as my personal experiences from my own life. Adventures that I had as a kid in my old neighborhood with my brothers and close friends in the woods next to where we lived, these things all lend themselves to some of my stories, such as LITTLE SOLDIERS.

SP!: THE WEBSITE FEATURES VIDEO TRAILERS FOR ALL OF YOUR TITLES. COULD YOU EXPLAIN THE PROCESS OF CREATING THEM, WHO WROTE THEM, DIRECTED THEM, ETC?

AZ: Yeah, in regard to the video trailers, this is something that we wanted to do that we feel is different than what everyone else is doing. We wanted to give the readers and people who are interested in our books an immersive experience via a short clip of each project, kind of to better explain the premise of each book. I think the video trailer has a certain effect that draws people in, because we are such an information-overload type of society that we need and want information directly and as quickly as we can get it. So, instead of having to read a synopsis, we give you a little movie-type trailer that you can just watch on your computer or mobile device. It's fun and different and kind of interactive. As far as the process of creating them, most of them were written by me and directed/put together by my business partner on the West Coast.

SP!: WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF MOTION COMICS? BASED ON YOUR TRAILERS I CAN SEE POTENTIAL IN YOUR STORIES BEING PRESENTED THIS WAY.

AZ: I am definitely a fan of motion comics. I like that aspect of the static panels of a comic book coming to life, even slightly, with that touch of motion. It is another layer that raises the overall comic book experience. I definitely agree that, based off of our trailers for our projects, our books definitely lend themselves to a motion comic arena. Now, without giving too much away, this is something that we are working on as well as working towards. We have some unique things that we are working on, creating, and moving towards, as well as some other things that are new, different, and that I think no other comic book company is currently doing. Keep your eyes on Inkwerk Studios; you don't want to miss anything! The future is now!

SP!: YOUR TITLES HAVE THEMES ABOUT CHOICES, OBLIGATIONS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND CONSEQUENCES, AS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF CHILDREN (WISH, CHERUBS), YOUNG ADULTS (JIN HU), AND MATURE, EDUCATED MEN. CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT THE CHALLENGES OF WRITING ABOUT CHILDREN AND ADULTS FACING MORAL DECISIONS OR OVERCOMING EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES?

AZ: Thanks for noticing that! As far as the challenges of writing about children and adults facing moral decisions and/or overcoming extreme circumstances, I personally feel that, when it comes to writing about children, there is that inherent innocence that all children possess. We, as adults, did have it at one time, but then there is that one moment that happens and you discover that your innocence is lost and now you have that edge, that jadedness. But it's walking that fine razor's edge as far as how to balance that. We all know that conflict is what pushes any story forward, so by putting children in situations where they must overcome extreme circumstances or having them make moral decisions, they will ultimately choose differently than an adult would. It's being able to weigh these two different outcomes against each other, almost like a puppeteer pulling the strings of the puppet to

get the necessary response. As far as choices, obligations, responsibilities, and ultimately, the consequences of those decisions, every one of us in every situation we are faced with has choices. It is the decisions that we make and move forward with that finally converge and give us the consequences. Again though, as I mentioned above, children will make different choices from adults, but with that said, it is how the characters learn or move beyond those choices and change, always growing into ultimately who that character (child or adult) will ultimately become, whether that be good or evil. Fundamentally, it is always about change!

SP!: WILL ALL OF THESE WORKS BE PRESENTED AS MINISERIES, SELF-CONTAINED GRAPHIC NOVELS, OR BOTH?

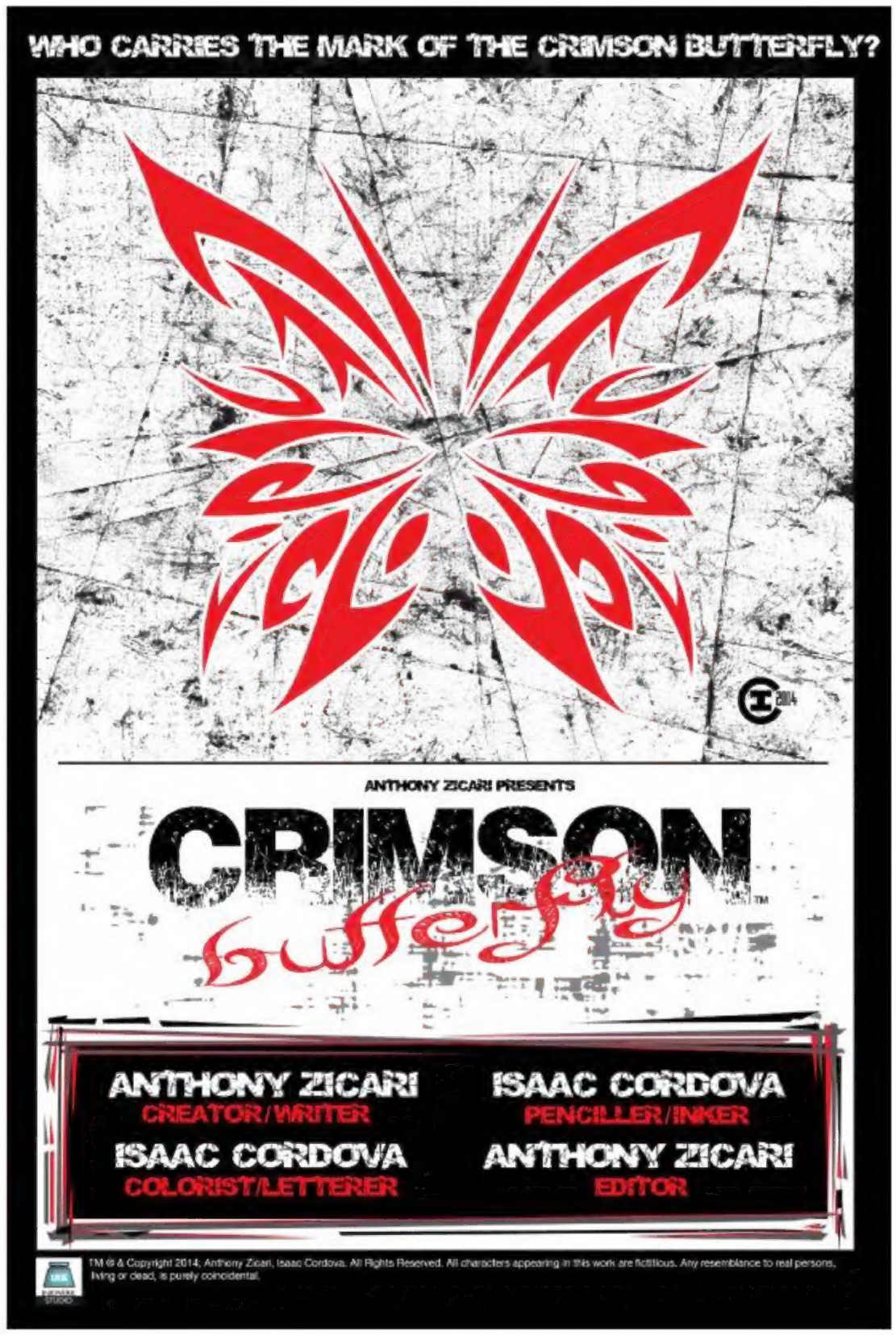
AZ: Each book is, for lack of a better word, an ongoing series. However, with that said, what I mean by that is that each story arc of four, six, eight, or however many issues will be self-contained as a miniseries and, when complete, it would stand alone as a complete story arc. Then the next miniseries/story arc would begin and so on and so forth. Then, from there, each story arc/miniseries would be packaged together into collected graphic novel editions. Future projects and books will be determined on a book-by-book basis. What I mean by that is that if we feel that the project would be better suited as a graphic novel, we will package it as such. If we feel it would be better suited as single issues, we will package it as such. Something else that I wanted to touch on briefly as well is our anthology titled THE COLLECTION #1. This is a sampling of some of our current and upcoming books/projects. What we plan on doing with this anthology is giving the readers a wide and varied selection of new projects throughout from our company, as we release THE COLLECTION #2, and so on. By doing so, we can get feedback and see what sticks and what doesn't, what the readers gravitate towards and what they tend to lean away from. We can then tweak our slate of books and upcoming projects by testing the waters and launching books out of the anthology that we know there is an audience to support.

SP!: LET'S LOOK AT YOUR WRITING OUTSIDE OF COMIC BOOKS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE SHORT FILM, TIMES LIKE THESE, OF WHICH IMDB.COM (HTTP://WWW.IMDB.COM/TITLE/TT2914846/FULLCREDITS?REF_=TT_OV_ST_SM) STATES: "THE FILM RELIVES THE EXPERIENCE OF MARISOL, A WOMAN WHOSE PAST WILL SHED LIGHT ON AN ISSUE MOST WOMEN KEEP HIDDEN BEHIND CLOSED DOORS." YOU ARE LISTED IN THE CREDITS AS THE SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND MANAGER. HOW DID THAT EXPERIENCE HELP YOU MARKET YOUR OWN PROJECTS AT INKWERK STUDIOS?

AZ: I had actually been working on everything Inkwerk Studios when I was hired as the social media marketing manager on Times like These. So, it was kind of a double-crossover effect. I definitely brought things that I had learned from the comic book industry to my work in the film industry and vice versa. Things that I put into effect in regard to Inkwerk Studios I tried to bring to my marketing and advertising for Times like These. Some things worked and some things didn't. It is definitely a trial-and-error type of thing and it is always a learning process. But. regardless of whether it worked or not, it definitely helped to look at different situations in both mediums with a different set of skills and a different way of doing things.

SP!: CAN YOU COMPARE AND CONTRAST THE DIFFERENCES IN MARKETING COMICS VERSUS FILMS IN SOCIAL MEDIA?

AZ: I definitely can! Comic books and film, I feel, lend themselves to a similar format. For me as a writer of comic books, knowing what goes into the writing, I feel the writer is basically the director and the artist is the camera that brings the writer/director's vision to life. It is a collaborative effort and when you click with the rest of the people on your project/team, magic can definitely be


WHO CARRIES THE MARK OF THE CRIMSON BUTTERFLY?
ANTHONY ZICARI PRESENTS
CRIMSON
butterfly
ANTHONY ZICARI
CREATOR/WRITER
ISAAC CORDOVA
PENCILLER/INKER
ISAAC CORDOVA
COLORIST/LETTERER
ANTHONY ZICARI
EDITOR
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made! As far as marketing it, though, you have to maximize your efforts and presence on social media across the gamut of available platforms. Especially being a small press and/or independent company. Social media is FREE advertising and marketing and, if you are not taking advantage of it, you are sorely missing out on a special opportunity to connect with your audience!

Now, as far as the differences, comic books are a static medium, while films are moving pictures. With comic books you have to be a bit more hands-on to try and get the word out there. You have to show teasers, multiple pages, and covers to create that illusion with your readers and draw them in. You need to capture their interest with the written word and hand-drawn pictures. With film, you can just post up a visual trailer or piece of the film and wait while they click on it and sit back and watch it. I guess that ultimately, what I am trying to say is film is not as labor-intensive as comic books when trying to get the word out about your projects.

SP!: FOLLOWING UP ON YOUR WORK ON THE FILM, WHAT LESSONS HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT PROMOTION, MANAGING CREATIVE CONTENT, AND OBTAINING FINANCIAL BACKING?

AZ: First and foremost, with both mediums, it comes down to money and securing financial backing. Currently, there are many options, such as Kickstarter, Indiegogo, and Patreon, where you can go to try and secure funding from donors to finance your projects. This is definitely something that I feel more people need to try and take advantage of. You have nothing to lose. As I mentioned earlier in this interview, every success and every failure is a learning experience, and as long as you take something away from it, it is a positive. Now, as far as promotion, this is extremely important. You have to be your strongest supporter and promoter. You have to constantly have new content being posted up and always think four steps ahead. People get bored quite easily if they keep seeing the same thing and if you don't have anything new to post, they will quickly lose interest. So, that is most important: always have new content. I guess this can tie into managing creative content, as well. You have to play a game of chess. Knowing what to post and when to post it can make a huge difference. This is definitely something that can't be taught; you just have to learn it through trial and error.

SP!: WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

AZ: Again, this is a constantly changing situation. I am still working on the social media and managing for the film and, as a result, I have learned by doing the work. I know now that you really have to push to get the word out there. You have to think outside the box. Being an independent film, you don't have the money of the big huge studios, so it is all about maximizing what you do have and making the most of it for the benefit of the overall project. Don't be afraid to be your biggest supporter.

SP!: YOU ARE DEVELOPING A SERIES OF WRITER'S WORKSHOP/DISCUSSIONS WITH THE BUFFALO, NY LIBRARY SYSTEM. CAN YOU GIVE US AN OVERVIEW OF THE WORKSHOPS AND A BRIEF SYLLABUS?

AZ: Sure, however I must preface this by saying that this is still under development. I know that I have heard from a lot of parents that they find it extremely hard to get their children to read. So, I started thinking about how we can turn this trend of being turned off to reading around and I thought how about getting kids to read through comic books. So, I approached the Buffalo Library System and they were open to it and asked me to create an overview and syllabus to submit to them for further review. I have always loved reading and reading comic books specifically. As a result, I know there are comic books that run across a million different things from superheroes to adventure to

romance to sports, and the list goes on and on. Literally, there is something that will appeal to each and every one of us. With that initial thought, this idea was planted and has grown into something that I am very proud of and, hopefully, will get younger kids not only interested in reading, but in comic books, because for the industry to grow, we need to have an influx of new blood, younger kids. Also, it will hopefully spark an interest within even one kid for a love of writing or drawing, and if that happens, then to me, this project will have been a huge success!

SP!: WILL YOU MAKE THE WORKSHOPS AVAILABLE VIA PODCAST OR THROUGH OTHER MEDIA AVENUES?

AZ: As I mentioned above, I am still finalizing everything with the Buffalo Library System and this process is constantly evolving. With that said, yes, definitely, these are directions that I have considered and that I have mentioned to them. I am hopeful we will be able to implement making the workshops available via podcast, social media, or other media avenues.

SP!: WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ON THE CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATORS OF INDEPENDENT COMIC BOOKS, COMPARED TO WHEN YOU FIRST STARTED OUT?

AZ: Okay! Great question. They are exponentially huge. I mean, as I stated above, when I first started out submitting and trying to secure paying professional work as a writer/editor, there was no internet. I handwrote or typed letters and scripts and snail-mailed them. Now, with the coming of the internet age and social media, the doors have been thrown wide open for current creators. I, for one, am glad to see this and see these opportunities for current creators. I mean, you can literally reach out and speak with professional creators, as long as they are willing to receive the correspondence. You can write up an email and hit a button and send it off. There are opportunities due to web comics. Everything you need to know about comic books and pop culture entertainment is on the web via various comic book news outlets and websites. This is a golden age, a renaissance for the comic book industry. If you are a creator now, you have more opportunities than there ever were before. If you have the drive and the determination, you can definitely achieve great things. It all comes down to how you market yourself.

SP!: GIVE US A BASIC OVERVIEW OF HOW YOU WORK WITH ARTISTS.

AZ: I absolutely love the back and forth of creativity! I love working directly with artists! I usually attack things from the mind of a writer/editor. What I mean by that is that I see something in my head and then I write it down. I am ALWAYS open to the feedback, input, and opinions from my artists as creators! I mean, they might see something from the artist's point of view that works better for a certain situation that I wouldn't see coming from a writer/editor's point of view, and I am always open to that back-and-forth, because ultimately, if it helps the final finished product, then I am always open for it. I have had the wonderful experience of working with a bevy of extremely talented and exceptionally gifted artists, both in comic books and film! Here are some artists that I have worked with that I feel are poised for greatness! This is by no means a complete list, only a short list of people that I know personally, work with and call my friends. If I forgot anyone, please accept my sincerest apology. I didn't mean to slight anyone: Isaac Cordova, Claudio Sepulveda, Ben Dunn, Eduardo Francisco, Vincent Sauvion, Magali Paillat, Malcolm Wong, Lorena Gordon, Jason Elliot, Pablo Juarez, Jim Callahan, Alessandro Ceccarelli, Kostas Zachopoulos, Vassillis Gogtzilas, Oscar Capristo, and Giancarlo Caracuzzo! Check these artists, writers, film makers, and creators out when you have a chance. You will not be disappointed!

SP!: WHERE DO YOU SEE INKWERK STUDIOS IN TEN YEARS? ARE YOU LOOKING TO STICK TO COMICS AND GRAPHIC NOVELS ONLY, OR WOULD YOU LIKE TO BRANCH OUT INTO MULTIMEDIA, FILM, TELEVISION, CABLE, AND ETCETERA?

AZ: We will have definitely expanded our comic book, graphic novel line! By the way, we have quite a few new and interesting things coming soon. We are developing a new logo, as well as including some new imprints. Of course, it is only logical to want to branch out. This isn't something that we are waiting ten years down the line to start getting into. My business partner, who is based on the West Coast, is actually already branching out into these other mediums with our properties. Not trying to be cryptic or anything, but I can't really say much more than that at this time. We definitely have a plan and we are working towards making that plan a reality. It is something that is always in a constant state of flux and change, as we are adapting to the current market and doing whatever is necessary to achieve and realize our plans. We also have some new, unique avenues that we are exploring. These are things that, personally, I have not seen any other company develop. So, as a result, I definitely think that these are areas where we will be setting the trends. For Inkwerk Studios, the future definitely looks very bright indeed!

SP!: DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER PROJECTS OR WORKS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO MENTION/EXPLAIN BRIEFLY FOR US?

AZ: Yes! Definitely! Of course I do! Thank you for this opportunity! Well, there are quite a few other things that I am working on; some that I can talk about and others that, for at least the time being now, I have to keep quiet about. Here is a short list of some that I can talk about.

CRIMSON BUTTERFLY: This is a comic book series project that I am working on with Isaac Cordova. This project deals with family, loss, and ultimately, revenge. But there is a twist. It pushes past the typical revenge story and explores the after effects of seeking revenge. By that, I mean it delves into how seeking revenge and letting it consume you for so long affects you and what do you do once that revenge has

been concluded. You have achieved your goal and attained the revenge you sought for so long, but now what do you do?

I was also recently hired by a film production company as their director of distribution. The name of the company is Green Leaf Pictures (www.greenleafpictures.com).

I have already dove head first into this endeavor and I am thoroughly enjoying each and every second of it. In the short time that I have been working for them, I have already spear-headed the design of a film poster for one of our newest films, as well as had a hand in developing trailers for other films and much more!

I also have a new miniseries that I have been working on with Ben Dunn! The title is SCIENCE IS MAGIC! It has been a fun and interesting project to work on and something that I feel strongly will appeal to a lot of readers out there. This is slated to begin early in 2015! It will be released through Antarctic Press (http://www.antarctic-press.com/) It was also mentioned in a brief article on Bleeding Cool (http://www.bleedingcool.com/2014/10/22/ben-dunn-proves-that-science-is-magic-in-january/)

Another new creator-owned project that I am working on is Claudio Sepulveda's DREAMTOWN AMUSEMENT PARK. This has been a blast and it is definitely something you haven't seen before. You can keep up to date on everything in regard to this project by liking the Facebook page and watching for new updates! (https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dreamtown-Amusement-Park/574754125948481?ref=br_tf)

I have also been working closely with Malcolm Wong, creator of Malcolm Wong's Dog Eaters. I believe you guys also did a quick interview with him, as well. I have been working with him to help him as he moves forward into publishing the books and projects on his own. I have been helping him with marketing strategies, advertising and other advice. This is definitely a project you should check out (http://www.dogeaters-manga.com).

SP!: OKAY, ANTHONY. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SAY, OR DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR ASPIRING CREATORS?

AZ: Absolutely! To all the aspiring creators out there, never give up on your dreams! Keep creating, be hungry, and keep fighting. Create and get it out there however you can. If you are a writer, then write. If you are an artist, then draw or paint, and so on and so forth! There are so many opportunities, especially with the internet and web comics, as well as the digital arena! Be persistent and, most of all, work hard! Trust me, in the end it will have been worth it. When you see something that you have put your heart and soul into out there with your name on it, it truly is one of the greatest feelings you can ever have, especially as a creator, and if you have the drive and the determination, you will achieve your goals!

Thank you for taking the time to do this interview and showcase Inkwerk Studios and myself through SP! Magazine! I (as well as everyone at Inkwerk Studios) greatly appreciate this wonderful opportunity!

FACEBOOK PAGES:

https://www.facebook.com/inkwerkstudios

https://www.facebook.com/anthony.zicari.5

WEB SITES:

www.inkwerkstudios.com

www.greenleafpictures.com

www.tltfilm.com

TRAILERS:

EMPYREAL: http://vimeo.com/47184422

WISH: http://vimeo.com/74758825

CHERUBS: http://vimeo.com/73009361

KING OF HIP HOP: http://vimeo.com/55577166

NINETY: http://vimeo.com/44419388

LITTLE SOLDIERS: http://vimeo.com/87049036

OTHER PROJECTS IN THE WORKS:

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Crimson-Butterfly/1456685717916007

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dreamtown-Amusement-Park/574754125948481

https://www.facebook.com/DogEatersComic

https://www.facebook.com/TimesLikeTheseFilm

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Green-Leaf-Pictures/187690238061096

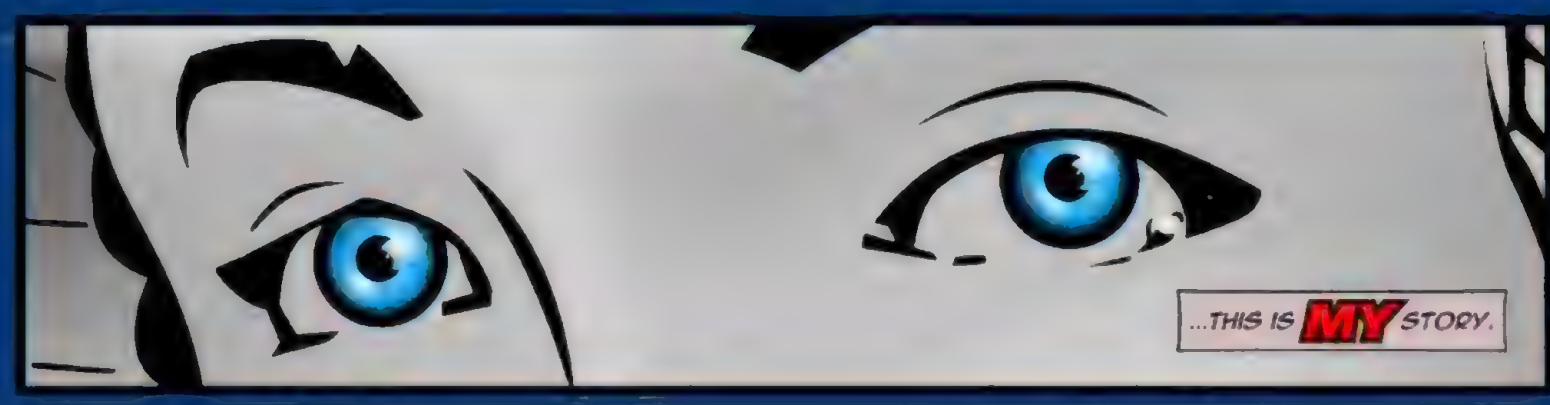
ANTHONY ZICARI PRESENTS

CRIMSON butterfly

SNEAK PEEK!

THATS ME.
WELL, AT LEAST...
THAT USE TO BE ME.
A MOMENT FROZEN IN TIME, WHICH I NO LONGER REMEMBER.
IT SEEMS LIKE A LIFETIME AGO. I WAS A CHILD SO HAPPY AND FULL OF LIFE. NOT A CARE IN THE WORLD,
BUT THATS IMPOSSIBLE.

THE EVENTS RACE THROUGH MY MIND, OVER AND OVER AGAIN.
I TRY TO PROCESS IT ALL. I TELL MYSELF EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON.
I JUST DONT UNDERSTAND, BECAUSE YOU SEE, CHILDHOOD INNOCENCE ONCE LOST CAN NEVER BE RECAPTURED.



ANTHONY ZICARI PRESENTS

CRIMSON butterfly

SNEAK PEEK!

MOSCOW, RUSSIA
PRESENT DAY.
I'M BEING FOLLOWED.
PICKED HER UP ABOUT THREE BLOCKS BACK.
NEVER SEEN HER BEFORE ...SHE MUST BE A NEW ONE
THIS SHOULDN'T TAKE LONG.
THE ALLEY WAY UP AHEAD WILL DO JUST FINE.

ANTHONY ZICARI PRESENTS

CRIMSON butterfly

SNEAK PEEK!

HAHAHAHAHAHA ....VERY FUNNY
SO, CHEER-LEADER, WHO SENT YOU?
AND DID THEY GIVE YOU A HALL PASS?
THEY TOLD ME YOUR TONGUE NEVER KNOWS WHEN TO QUIT.
SO... SCHOOLS OUT ALREADY?
THE THIN MAN SENDS HIS REGARDS.
HE WOULD HAVE LOVED TO WITNESS YOUR DEATH BUT YOUR HEAD WILL BRING A SMILE TO HIS FACE.
LOOKING FORWARD TO HEARING YOUR AGONIZING SCREAMS AS YOU GASP YOUR LAST BREATH OF LIFE!
OR DID YOU DRESS UP EARLY FOR HALLOWEEN?
KEEP ON DREAMIN!!!!

ANTHONY ZICARI PRESENTS

CRIMSON butterfly

SNEAK PEEK!

ANTHONY ZICARI PRESENTS

CRIMSON butterfly

SNEAK PEEK!

FIRST...I'M GONNA TAKE CARE OF YOU...THEN, I'M GOING AFTER THE THIN MAN!
YOU'RE GONNA REGRET COMING AFTER ME.
THIS IS THE EXACT INSTANT WHERE I REALIZED I HAD BEEN REBORN.
NORMALLY MOST PEOPLE SLUDGE THROUGH THEIR DAILY LIVES NEVER FULLY REALIZING THEIR TRUE POTENTIAL IN THE ONE LIFE WE ALL GET. I'M NOT GOING TO LET THAT HAPPEN TO ME AGAIN.
THIS IS MY SECOND CHANCE AND I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I HAVE TO DO!
AGE CANNOT WITHER NOR PARALYZE THIS SPECTACULAR, STUNNING, SPLENDOR SPLASHED SAGA!
ANTHONY ZICARI, CREATOR, WRITER AND EDITOR
ISAAC CORDOVA, PENCILLER, INKER, LETTERER AND COLORIST
ANTHONY ZICARI, EDITOR IN CHEIF

S.P.A.C.E.

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A WRITTEN VIEW

Social Media - A Necessary Evil

By Douglas Owen

It is the most confusing part of publishing and no one person has the best answer. This silly little word means more than one thing. It is also something that everyone who self-publishes their work needs to master. Social Media.

The catchphrase used in the publishing world is "Author Platform," but it goes by many other names in the self-publishing world. Website, Twitter account, LinkedIn profile, Facebook account, Google Circles, and many others. The world is so confused about what is out there that a creator can get lost in the shuffle. We need to use them, we need to master them, and we need to get people to follow us on each one.

But, if you are like me, there are many other things pulling your attention. The gig you have to do tomorrow, the book you are writing, the line-work needed for the next edition, and your family, friends, pets… as well as, God forbid, a day job. So, how are you going to group all these things together and control that thrashing beast? I call it a miracle, while programmers call it a plug-in.

"What? A plug-in? Like a lamp?" you ask.

No, a plug-in is coding that sits in your website and does a function above and beyond what the website coding would do. Stuff like keep records of visitors, average load-speed of the site, and many other things. But for our purposes, we'll call it magic and just move on.

Okay, first you need a website.

Domain names are easy enough to secure. In fact, they are really cheap. Less than one dollar per month. Hopefully, you can secure the one you want. Don't skimp on this step! I know a lot of writers who have decided to go on the cheap and not use a full domain name, but instead use what is called a sub-domain. You may have seen them, the ones that read "YourName.wordpress.com." The main domain is "Wordpress.com," the sub is where we used to put the "www."

Hosting is another thing not to cheap out on, but hosting is cheap as well. Hosting can be as little as three dollars per month, or as high as five hundred. You have no need for the most expensive, but you should make sure that your host will allow multiple sub-domains, multiple hosted domains, and unlimited bandwidth. "Why," you may ask? Well, first you want to be able to expand the site. Say you're a band and have two albums out. We'll call our band "The Pings." We register the domain name, "thepings.com" and take it to our hosting company. We have two albums and want a distinct look for each album page. Using a sub-domain will allow this to happen very easily. So, instead of having fans go to "www.thepings.com/unauthorized" we can have them go to "unauthorized.thepings.com". In the world of websites, the initial offering could look a lot different.

It just looks cleaner, really. And you want unlimited bandwidth so you can stream song samples (or artwork) without having to pay extra. Nothing will get you down like being presented with a bill because you used too much bandwidth.

Email accounts are another thing. Make sure they don't limit you too much, and that you can control them via a webpage (also known as webmail). Make sure all your communication is through your site's email account, not a gmail/hushmail/Hotmail account. Why? Because it makes you more professional, and people don't think you're scamming them when you have your own domain email address. Think of it this way: would you actually click the link in an email from thepings@hotmail.com or would you click the one from leadsinger@thepings.com?

Okay, you have the domain name and you have the hosting company; now what? Now you have to create content. This is one of the hardest decisions you have to make. Do you create your own webpages or use a CMS? (CMS stands for Content Management System.) CMS will use PHP and MySQL to display webpages to visitors. The good thing about using CMS is that you can control what each page shows with ease. The problem with a CMS is that you have to know a little bit about using them. There is a learning curve.

Good CMS software runs from free to very expensive. I use WordPress for my CMS, but have played with others. In general, you want something that has the features you want/need and the flexibility to grow with your future. Before you dismiss WordPress, take a poll on your favourite websites to see what they are using. You will be surprised to see how many of them use WordPress. How can you tell? Go to their home page and put "WP-admin" after the URL tag. If it goes to a log in, they are using WordPress. Here are a number of sites that use WordPress:

- http://www.indiesunlimited.com/
- http://www.mp3.com/
- http://blog.ups.com/
- http://mashable.com/

And these are just a few. As you can see, they look different and can really stand out.

So you decide on a CMS. You can use their standard template or get one of your own. If you like dealing with CSS and PHP, you can build one, or use the services of a professional. When I need something, I go to Fivver.com. Good prices and fast service. They will even help you set up the CMS of your choice, but usually, your host company has a back end that does all that.

So, you have that done, now what?

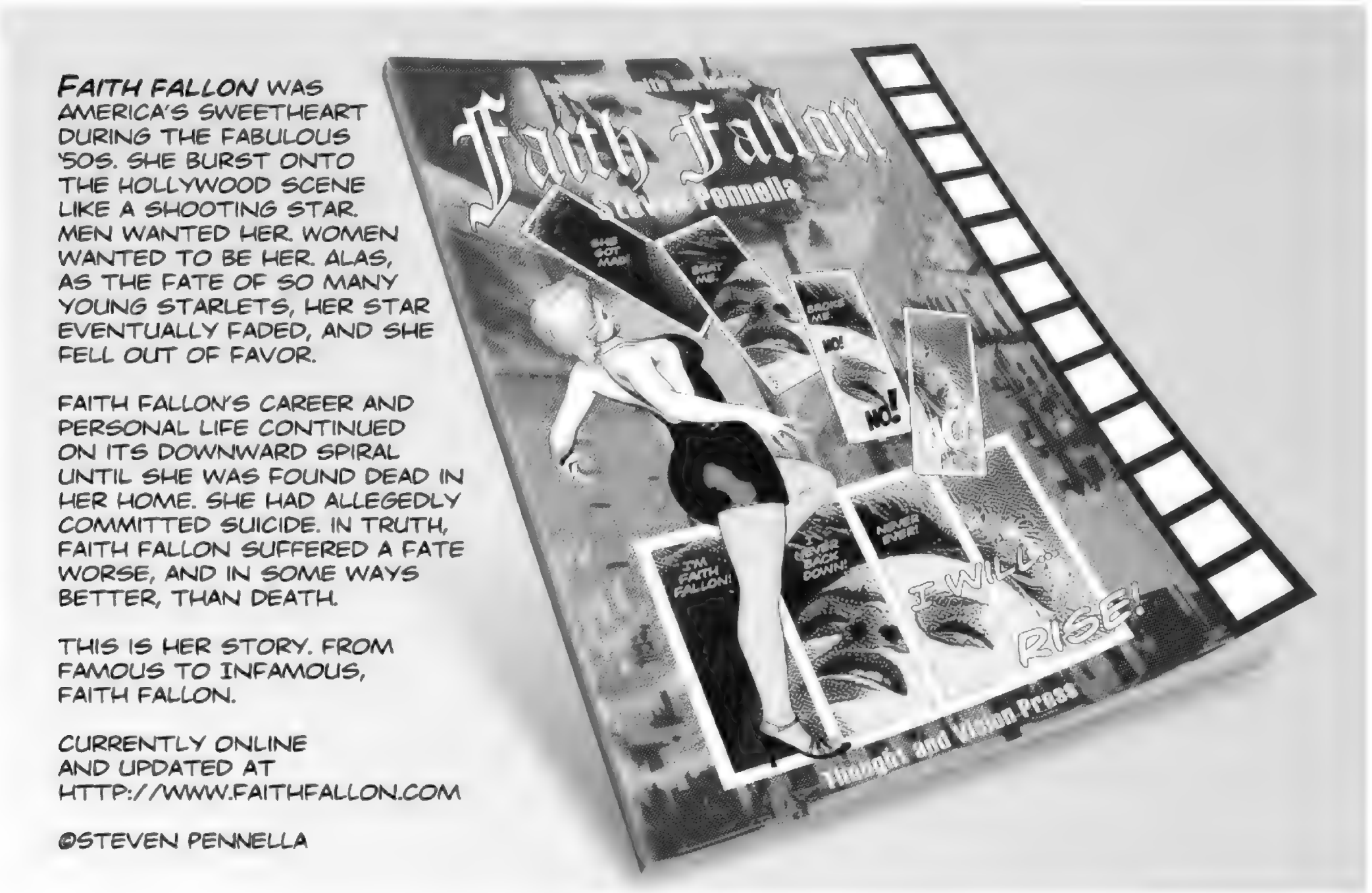
Now it is time to build your social media. Get accounts with:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Tumblr
- Path
- Google+

Each of these social media sites can have a special page for you to build your online presence. Don't use your personal page; create a public page. That way, if one of your friends leaves a comment, it is not seen by all your followers. This is really important, especially if you get popular. How would you like a horde of people showing up at your next dinner date? I wouldn't like it. Once you have the pages set up, link them to your blog. WordPress uses a plug-in called JetPack to do a number of things and it has a "Sharing" section to push content to the media sites.

Now that you have everything set up, you can start building your profile with all your followers. They can see you on the media sites and follow your blog. This is important, for your blog or public website is how you get more followers, readers, and fans. As more people visit your site, search engines start to raise your site's ranking. Once that happens, you'll get people finding you through search engines.

Thus the snowball grows. It is never-ending.


FAITH FALLON WAS AMERICA'S SWEETHEART DURING THE FABULOUS '50S. SHE BURST ONTO THE HOLLYWOOD SCENE LIKE A SHOOTING STAR. MEN WANTED HER. WOMEN WANTED TO BE HER. ALAS, AS THE FATE OF SO MANY YOUNG STARLETS, HER STAR EVENTUALLY FADED, AND SHE FELL OUT OF FAVOR.
FAITH FALLON'S CAREER AND PERSONAL LIFE CONTINUED ON ITS DOWNWARD SPIRAL UNTIL SHE WAS FOUND DEAD IN HER HOME. SHE HAD ALLEGEDLY COMMITTED SUICIDE. IN TRUTH, FAITH FALLON SUFFERED A FATE WORSE, AND IN SOME WAYS BETTER, THAN DEATH.
THIS IS HER STORY. FROM FAMOUS TO INFAMOUS, FAITH FALLON.
CURRENTLY ONLINE AND UPDATED AT HTTP://WWW.FAITHFALLON.COM
©STEVEN PENNELLA
Faith Fallon
Pennella
SHE GOT MAD!
BEAT ME.
BROKE ME.
NO!
I'M FAITH FALLON!
I NEVER BACK DOWN!
NEVER EVER!
I WILL... RISE!
Thought and Vision Press

The Return of the Silver Age

Arlen Schumer

By Steve Pennella

Arlen Schumer (http://arlenschumer.com) is the author of the newly reissued The Silver Age of Comic Book Art (Revised Edition) (Archway Publishing). The original 2003 edition won the Independent Book Publishers Award for Best Popular Culture Book. Arlen is also an award-winning comic book-style illustrator for the advertising and editorial markets, a member of The Society of Illustrators, an author/designer of coffee table art books, and a recognized expert on American popular culture— ABC-TV's 20/20 called him "one of the country's preeminent authorities on comics and culture" after interviewing him in 2010 (http://youtu.be/_e634FDTBal). He presents his VisuaLectures on comic book art history and other subjects (The Twilight Zone and the music of Bruce Springsteen) at universities and cultural institutions across the country.

SP!: THIS BOOK WAS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN 2003. WHAT COMPELLED YOU TO BRING IT BACK TO PRINT?

AS: Back in 2003, when the original edition of The Silver Age of Comic Book Art came out, Facebook wasn't around and the Marvel movies had just kicked off the decade (The X-Men and the first Sam Raimi-directed Spider-Man film). My book, published by a mom-and-pop publisher in Oregon, came and went with no major promotion or publicity. Though it received great reviews, and was blurbed by the likes of Will Eisner and Alan Moore, and won the Independent Publishers Award for Best Popular Culture Book of 2003, neither the general comic book audience, nor the larger pop culture audience, ever even heard of it.

So, when the publisher went belly-up in '05, and rights to reprint reverted back to me, I was determined to bring my book back into print ever since. Though I was without an agent, and therefore had difficulty getting to a lot of publishers, the many rejections I did get over the past eight years were offset by my belief that there was a brand NEW audience interested in comics history (and specifically The Silver Age), because of specific developments in the past decade: the boffo box office of the Marvel movies, all based on characters from The Silver Age; the growth of Facebook, creating many comic-centric groups; and the proliferation of hardcover, archival collections of comic book and comic strip history, like the IDW Artist Editions—enough to warrant a double-page spread in The New York Times a couple of years ago!

When I decided to fully participate in Facebook as my social media of choice a couple of years ago, I was able to begin two comics history groups of my own—one based around my Silver Age book and the era, the other devoted to the career of Neal Adams (whose art graces the title page of my book as well as its final, concluding chapter), both with over 2500 members each—and I found out that I had a following that I'd never had before and a community I could get my work directly to. So, along with the growth in self-publishing at the same time as Facebook's rise, it made me realize last year that I didn't have to wait for a "real" publisher to come along and pat me on the head. I could do it myself!

After some research, I decided to go with Archway Publications, the "assisted publishing" division of Simon & Schuster (http://www.archway-publishing.com). They've done a BEAUTIFUL job on the printing of the book—it truly is "new, improved"! My original edition was beautifully printed, but Archway went above and beyond it: they gave me a truly-silver dust jacket this time (versus a four-color approximation of silver on my original), as well as a matte-finish case wrap illustration (under the dust jacket) that is worth the price of admission (if I do say so myself! ☒ I was also able to revise ALL the typography in the book, because I was only happy with about 60 percent of it the first time around, as well as throwing in a few new graphics throughout the book for sharp-eyed owners of my original edition!

SP!: COMICS IS A VISUAL MEDIUM, YET VIRTUALLY ALL COMIC ART BOOKS ARE TEXT HEAVY. YOU TOOK THE OPPOSITE APPROACH. IT SEEMS SO OBVIOUS TO PRESENT VISUAL HISTORY IN A VISUAL MANNER, YET IT'S NEVER BEEN DONE BEFORE OR SINCE. CAN YOU TAKE US THROUGH THE DESIGN PROCESS AND SHARE WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO TAKE THIS APPROACH?

AS: Every comic book history book before mine was text heavy, with miniature reproductions of the comic book art, panels, pages and covers.

As an artist/illustrator of comic book-style artwork who, like an entire generation, became an artist because of comic books (and particularly those of The Silver Age), it bothered me that there wasn't a coffee table book about the ART of comic books—and again, about the art and artists of The Silver Age, as most comics history books were about the Golden Age (the 1940s), the EC years of the '50s, or other genres and eras of comics. Where was the book about the era I and so many others of the Baby Boom generation (I'm on the tail of it, born in '58) came of age in, grew up with, and still are in love with? The Silver Age of Comics, which gave us the new DC heroes, the Marvel Revolution, the Batman TV Show, Neal Adams' game-changing photorealism, and the Jimi Hendrix of comics, Jim Steranko?

Well, if you want something done (right), you have to do it yourself. So I did. Over the years prior to the book's original publication in 2003, I had developed a verbal/visual approach to published historical essays about comic book art that you "read" like a comic book itself. That came from my training in graphic design at Rhode Island School of Design (which I went to because Walt Simonson had come out of there!), in which we learned the concept of the "concrete book," in which every design choice you make in book, magazine, or publication design should reinforce the subject matter. So, if you're doing a book, say, on the history of trains, maybe there are tiny train tracks running alongside the bottoms of the pages that carry the page numbers, your display type reflects nineteenth-century signage, etc. So it only made sense to me that a coffee table art book ABOUT comic book art should "read" like a giant comic book itself.

This design approach extended to the typography. I wanted to have the artists themselves—via first-person interviews and previously-published interviews with those deceased—to "talk" about the art, with my own curatorial text supplemental to their voices. So, there had to be two levels of text, two type fonts that would harmonize with each other. As I looked at the art I'd be reproducing, I realized that the original text in the word balloons and captions was now meaningless, since I was isolating the artwork and re-contextualizing it in coffee table art book-form; my book is not about the characters per se, nor is it about the "stories"; there are plenty of books about both. So I took license here and there to drop out original word balloon and caption-text in favor of the artists' quotes, set in comic book-styled text lettering. My entire design approach—utilizing

"JACK KIRBY IS SO FERTILE AND INVENTIVE...
...THE EPITOME OF AN ARTIST DOING SUPERHERO WORK."
SPLAK!
"AT THAT POINT I WAS MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM THE DC HOUSE STYLE...MY FIGURES DIDN'T LOOK AS MASCULINE AS JACK'S."
WHIIZZZZZZ
BTAM!
"BUT ULTIMATELY I CAUGHT ON AND I USED THOSE STORIES TO MAKE THE TRANSITION.
"I WORKED ESPECIALLY HARD ON THE CAPTAIN AMERICA ART TO HAVE IT RETAIN SOME OF JACK'S QUALITIES."
"IF I MANAGED ANY KIND OF RESEMBLANCE TO KIRBY'S WORK, IT WAS ONLY ON THE MOST SUPERFICIAL LEVEL, BECAUSE KIRBY'S APPROACH IS SO UNIQUELY HIS OWN THAT I COULDN'T BEGIN TO DUPLICATE IT."
ATOMIC FIST OF MY OWN
THE BIGGER THEY THE HARDER THEY FALL!
GROWING... YOUNGER... UNGER...

OPPOSITE TOP
Tales of Suspense #81, Jan. 1967, by Kirby; inked by Frank Giacoia.

OPPOSITE MIDDLE
Green Lantern #53, Jun. 1967, by Kane.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM
Tales of Suspense #80, May 1967, by Kane.

THIS PAGE
cover of *The Atom* #36, May 1968, by Kane.

reliefs, drop shadows, and enlargements—has been to treat each spread as if it were not a 13-inch by 18-inch book spread, but a 13-foot by 18-foot museum wall exhibit, with me as your curator, celebrating, for the first time, the glorious artwork by the greatest artists of our generation.

SP!: WHAT WAS THE REACTION FROM COMIC BOOK CREATORS WHEN THIS BOOK FIRST CAME OUT?

AS: Here's what Gene Colan wrote me:

"Through the years, I've had the pleasure of seeing many books that pay tribute to the art of comics. Almost all of them have been visually entertaining and informative. But, I must say, a new day has dawned! Arlen has created an entirely new format in presenting the art and words of the artists! It's the most comprehensive and personal way a fan or colleague can learn what lies beneath the art. Arlen has found the perfect way to inform AND entertain! It's simply awesome. The best representation of my work ever! Arlen really honored me. Well done!!!"

—Neal Adams

Some other significant comic book creators weighed in:

"The Silver Age of Comic Book Art is a unique achievement by Arlen Schumer and will be an ongoing source of reference, study and enjoyment for everyone interested in comics."

Regards,

—Steve Ditko

"Arlen Schumer is perhaps the very best person on Earth to do this project. Arlen is apart and a part of the Silver Age as much as it is possible to be. Arlen absorbs the Silver Age in comics through his very pores. Without question and sight unseen, I know all people who have an interest in comic books who read this book will enjoy it totally."

"I HAD A FEELING SUPERHEROES WERE READY TO COME BACK!"
—Carmine Infantino (1925-2013)
"AT THE TIME, 1959, '58, THE COMICS BUSINESS WAS DYING. WE EVEN HAD TO TAKE A PAGE CUT! ALL THE COMPANIES WERE TRYING EVERY THING: SCIENCE FICTION, ROMANCE, WESTERN, AND I FIGURED I BETTER CREATE SOMETHING FOR MYSELF, JUST IN CASE I CAN SELL IT AND GO OFF WITH IT
"SO I CREATED THIS CHARACTER, CAPT. WHIZ, AND THE COLORS OF EVIL HIS OWN GROUP OF VILLAINS, EACH A DIFFERENT COLOR. THEN, WHEN DC WRITER BOB KANIGHER CAME UP WITH THE NEW FLASH IN '56, HE CAME TO VISIT ME, AND SAID, 'WHAT ABOUT USING SOME OF THAT STUFF YOU ALREADY DID?' THESE WERE ALL THE CHARACTERS WHO EVENTUALLY BECAME THE FLASH AND ALL HIS VILLAINS! CAPT WHIZ'S COSTUME WAS ALMOST EXACTLY THE SAME!"
Captain Marvel, by original artist and co-creator C.C. Beck, circa 1950. "I was a big fan of Capt. Marvel," admitted Infantino. Aside from the character's similar name, the lightning insignia and name from outer oceans make him the visual antecedent to Captain Wild—a.k.a. The Flash!
"I HAD A FEELING SUPERHEROES WERE READY TO COME BACK!"
—Carmine Infantino (1925-2013)
"I HAD DONE A FEW DESIGNS, PLAYED WITH A COUPLE OF MASKS, SOME WITH HAIR SHOWING, BUT DIDN'T
#112, Mar. 1960
LIKE THAT. I HAD SOME WITH VERY FANCY BOOTS, BUT THEY WEREN'T PRACTICAL. I WANTED TO KEEP THE COSTUME AS PRACTICAL AS POSSIBLE! I WENT WITH A LIGHTNING
FLASH
Featuring MENACE OF THE MIRROR MISSILES
POW!
#144, May 1964
MOTIF, BECAUSE HE GOT HIS POWERS WHEN HE GOT HIT BY LIGHTNING! THAT'S THE WHOLE REASON FOR THE CHEST SYMBOL—IT'S ALL CONNECTED, IT'S ALL ORGANIC. THE LIGHTNING STRIPES WOULD HELP GIVE HIM SPEED WHEN HE RAN. EVEN THE LITTLE WINGS WOULD HELP GIVE HIM SPEED--LIKE LIGHTNING STRIKES!"
"OF COURSE, I WATCHED A LOT OF ANIMATION--THAT HELPED, TOO; THAT'S PART OF THE FLASH!"
#165, Feb. 1966
. HE'S A RUNNER--AND RUNNERS DON'T HAVE THOSE KINDS OF MUSCLES--THEY'RE VERY LEAN!"
"THE FLASH WAS NOT BUILT LIKE A SUPERHERO. IF YOU LOOK AT HIM CAREFULLY--HE'S NOT BUILT LIKE BATMAN.
#140, Nov. 1963
ABOVE: pencil sketch from the double-page feature, "How I Draw the Flash," #183, May 1967.
"MOVEMENT--THAT'S WHAT THE FLASH WAS ALL ABOUT. THAT'S WHAT MADE THE CHARACTER! HE WAS TOUGH TO DO BECAUSE OF THE CONSTANT NEED! EVERY PAGE, I'D HAVE CONSTANT MOTION! EVEN WHEN IT WAS QUIET, YOU'D NEED MOTION!"
'AND IT HAD TO BE DONE DIFFERENTLY EACH TIME!'
'SOMETIMES I HAD A SINGLE FIGURE WITH THESE LINES. OTHER TIMES, MULTIPLE FIGURES.'
BECAUSE IT WOULD GET BORING WITH JUST ONE SORT OF MOTION!"
#183, May 1968
"THIS PANEL CAME FROM WATCHING THE OLD CHRYSLER CARS...
?
...MANY YEARS AGO, THEY MADE A SHAPE LIKE A VEE, LIKE A WING, AND THEY FELT IT GAVE MOTION TO THEIR CAR DESIGNS. IT DIDN'T SELL, BUT I SAW IT AND SAID, 'BUT IT WORKS!' AND I USED IT."
#210, Mar. 1971
#220, Jan. 1973

"The Silver Age of Comic Book Art by Arlen Schumer is, quite simply, the most beautiful book ever put together on comic art of the 1960s. He has chosen his artist subjects flawlessly...and makes it seem all but inevitable that these artists, this art, best represents the period which saw the flowering of a Silver Age that was, in many ways, a new Golden Age."

—Roy Thomas

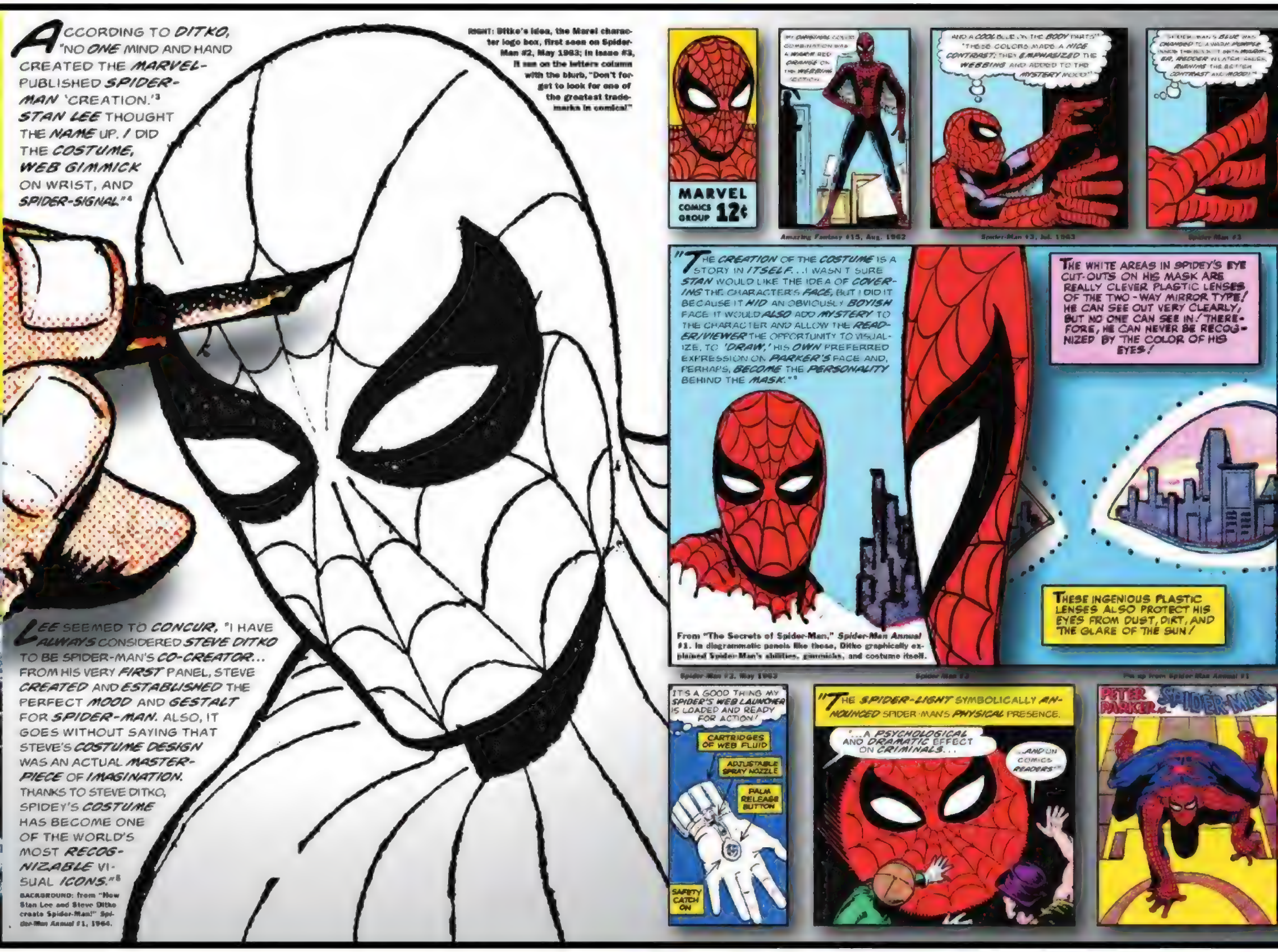
"Not only is Arlen Schumer's The Silver Age of Comic Book Art a spellbinding book about a magnificent art form, but it's one of the publishing world's great rarities–a book about art which is itself as much a resplendent work of art as the subject it so beautifully depicts. Every page of The Silver Age of Comic Book Art is a visual feast for the eyes. In honoring those artists whom the author considers the best of the best, Schumer, by virtue of his stunning layouts, incredible use of color and brilliant selection of awesome artwork, has proven himself one of the most exciting designers of all. "Even if you have no interest in comic book art per se, one glance at the pages of The Silver Age of Comic Book Art and you'll find yourself hypnotized by the dazzling examples of some of the finest illustrators of this or any century, examples which are showcased in a manner so unique and so daringly different that they can take your breath away. So, I happily extend my heartiest congratulations to the extremely talented Arlen Schumer. He has produced what is arguably the finest tribute to the most talented practitioners of one of America's truest and best loved art forms.

"Excelsior!"

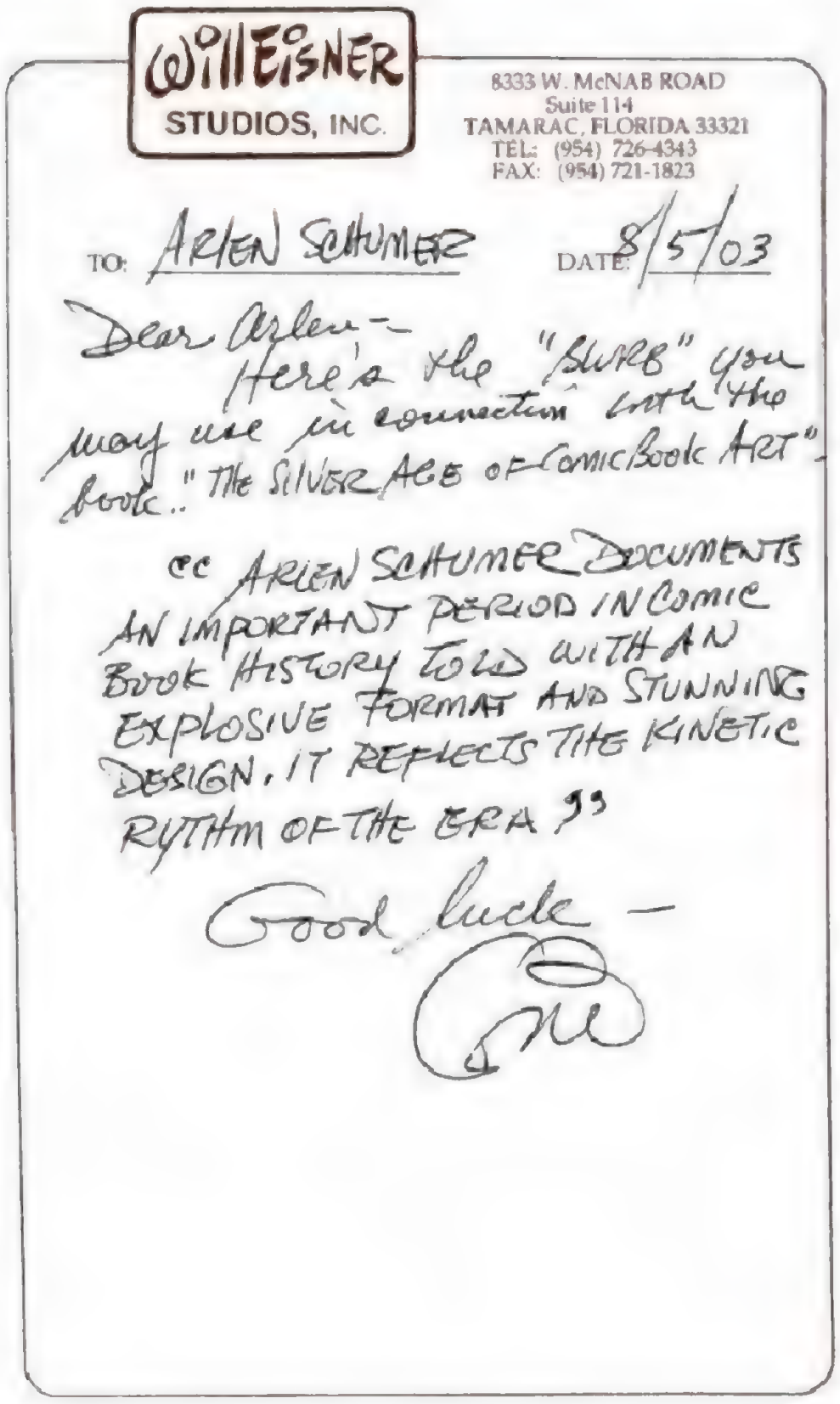
—Stan Lee

SP!: TELL US ABOUT HOW ALAN MOORE AND WILL EISNER REACTED AND/OR REACHED OUT TO YOU TO BLURB THE BOOK.

AS: I had met Will Eisner over the years (before he passed in 2005), because he was based in Tamarac, Florida, not too far away from where my retired mother lived in Boca Raton, and I visited him a few times there in his studio. I saw him many times up in NYC at various comic book-themed


ACCORDING TO DITKO, "NO ONE MIND AND HAND CREATED THE MARVEL-PUBLISHED SPIDER-MAN 'CREATION.'[3] STAN LEE THOUGHT THE NAME UP. I DID THE COSTUME, WEB GIMMICK ON WRIST, AND SPIDER-SIGNAL."[4]
LEE SEEMED TO CONCUR, "I HAVE ALWAYS CONSIDERED STEVE DITKO TO BE SPIDER-MAN'S CO-CREATOR... FROM HIS VERY FIRST PANEL, STEVE CREATED AND ESTABLISHED THE PERFECT MOOD AND GESTALT FOR SPIDER-MAN. ALSO, IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT STEVE'S COSTUME DESIGN WAS AN ACTUAL MASTER-PIECE OF IMAGINATION. THANKS TO STEVE DITKO, SPIDEY'S COSTUME HAS BECOME ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST RECOGNIZABLE VISUAL ICONS."[5]
BACKGROUND: from "How Stan Lee and Steve Ditko create Spider-Man!" Spider-Man Annual #1, 1964.
Insert: Ditko's idea, the Marvel character logo box, first seen on Spider-Man #2, May 1963; in issue #3, it ran on the letters column with the blurb, "Don't forget to look for one of the greatest trademarks in comics!"
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
Amazing Fantasy #15, Aug. 1962
Spider-Man #3, Jul. 1963
"THE CREATION OF THE COSTUME IS A STORY IN ITSELF...I WASN'T SURE STAN WOULD LIKE THE IDEA OF COVERING THE CHARACTER'S FACE, BUT I DID IT BECAUSE IT HID AN OBVIOUSLY BOYISH FACE. IT WOULD ALSO ADD MYSTERY TO THE CHARACTER AND ALLOW THE READER/VIEWER THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISUALIZE, TO 'DRAW,' HIS OWN PREFERRED EXPRESSION ON PARKER'S FACE AND, PERHAPS, BECOME THE PERSONALITY BEHIND THE MASK."[6]
THE WHITE AREAS IN SPIDEY'S EYE CUT-OUTS ON HIS MASK ARE REALLY CLEVER PLASTIC LENSES OF THE TWO-WAY MIRROR TYPE! HE CAN SEE OUT VERY CLEARLY, BUT NO ONE CAN SEE IN! THEREFORE, HE CAN NEVER BE RECOGNIZED BY THE COLOR OF HIS EYES!
THESE INGENIOUS PLASTIC LENSES ALSO PROTECT HIS EYES FROM DUST, DIRT, AND THE GLARE OF THE SUN!
From "The Secrets of Spider-Man," Spider-Man Annual #1. In diagrammatic panels like these, Ditko graphically explained Spider-Man's abilities, gimmicks, and costume itself.
Spider-Man #2, May 1963
Spider-Man #3
Pin-up from Spider-Man Annual #1
IT'S A GOOD THING MY SPIDER'S WEB LAUNCHER IS LOADED AND READY FOR ACTION!
CARTRIDGES OF WEB FLUID
ADJUSTABLE SPRAY NOZZLE
PALM RELEASE BUTTON
SAFETY CATCH ON
"THE SPIDER-LIGHT SYMBOLICALLY ANNOUNCED SPIDER-MAN'S PHYSICAL PRESENCE.
"...A PSYCHOLOGICAL AND DRAMATIC EFFECT ON CRIMINALS...
...AND ON COMICS READERS!"
PETER PARKER... SPIDER-MAN

events, award shows, and conventions. So, when it came time to blurb my book, I sent him a few sample chapters in color-copy form, along with a cover letter, and kept my fingers crossed. I received this fax from him: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STUDIOS, INC.

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Suite 114
TAMARAC, FLORIDA 33321
TEL: (954) 726-4343
FAX: (954) 721-1823

TO: ARLEN SCHUMER DATE: 8/5/03

Dear Arlen—
Here's the "BLURB" you may use in connection with the book.. "The SILVER AGE OF COMIC BOOK ART"

cc ARLEN SCHUMER DOCUMENTS AN IMPORTANT PERIOD IN COMIC BOOK HISTORY TOLD WITH AN EXPLOSIVE FORMAT AND STUNNING DESIGN. IT REFLECTS THE KINETIC RYTHM OF THE ERA ""

Good luck —

His handwriting reads: "Arlen Schumer documents an important period in comic book history, told with an explosive format and stunning design. It reflects the kinetic rhythm of the era." Thanx, Will! You live on forever in my book (a couple of his classic Spirit images are in there, too)!

I knew that the greatest living comic book writer, Englishman Alan Moore, loved The Silver Age of Comics—so much of his writing was informed by that era, its characters, and its creators (his series Supreme was his take on the Silver Age Superman mythos). I also knew he wasn't on email; you had to get his snail-mail address and mail him something if you wanted a response. Luckily, I had a comic book buddy who had interviewed Moore for his video documentary (Masters of Comic Book Art, 1987), and he gave me Moore's mailing address. So, off went another package of color copies and fan-boy love letter to Northampton, England!

A month or so later, I get a phone call in my studio in the middle of a summer day. A man with a Shakespearean English brogue bellows out in a stentorian manner, "Is Arlen Schumer there? This is Alan Moore..." Oh my God, I must've gasped! He continued without missing a beat, "I'm calling to give you your blurb for your book...You'll have to write it down as I will dictate it to you." Again, oh my God! I stumbled around looking for a writing instrument and a piece of paper, which of course, I couldn't find in an art studio! I lifted a crumpled xerox out of the garbage can, flattened it, and found a stubby pencil from the same garbage can to write with... and took down the following from Alan Moore himself, my hand shaking while writing:

"A lovingly crafted tribute to the superhero comic of the 1960s, The Silver Age of Comic Book Art recaptures the four-color visionary surge of the era, its jet-age psychedelic rush of imagination and the titanic, luminous figures, both real and imaginary, that glittered in its firmament. For a brief moment in the late 20th century, it seemed as if the spirit of the age wore a vivid leotard, a chest emblem, and traveled in a strobing blur of speed lines. For anyone with any interest in or affection for that moment, this beautiful volume is indispensible."

SP!: YOUR BOOK IS A MUST-READ FOR THE CURRENT GENERATION OF COMIC BOOK FANS THAT ONLY KNOW THEIR SUPERHEROES FROM THE MOVIES AND TV. OLD-SCHOOL COMIC FANS WILL LOVE IT, BUT WHAT ARE YOU PLANS TO GRAB TODAY'S GENERATION OF READERS?

AS: I'm proud to be able to bring out The Silver Age of Comic Book Art (Revised Edition) as an e-book for the new generation that's reading on electronic platforms! And they're in for a treat, as the colorful images from my book positively LEAP off the screen! I believe I'm going to reach an entirely NEW audience via the e-book, who will be exposed to the generation of comic book artists I consider OUR renaissance masters of the human figure. The superhero figure!

SP!: YOUR FACEBOOK GROUP "THE SILVER AGE OF COMIC BOOK ART" BOASTS OVER 2,500 MEMBERS. THE ABILITY TO INTERACT WITH YOUR READERS WASN'T THERE IN 2003. WHAT OTHER SOCIAL PLATFORMS WILL YOU USE TO PROMOTE THIS BOOK (E.G. GOOGLE HANGOUTS, YOUR RECENT LECTURES AT ART ON A GALLERY)?

AS: I'm on Twitter, Tumblr and Instagram, and I plan on using all three—but Facebook is my virtual "home," since I use it as an interactive blog throughout the day/night, and between my own page and my two comics history groups, I'm pretty wired-in 24/7/365, in between my regular work on the computer and/or the drawing board.

In addition, later this fall, I will be starting a series of eight live interactive web events (formerly known as "webinars"), based on each of the eight artists in my book, with the new media company Midnight Media Capture (http://midnightmediacapture.com/mmc-presents/the-silver-age-of-comic-book-art- live-interactive-web-series/). I'm really excited about this new platform to reach readers and fans of comic book art history throughout the 'net—and the world!

SP!: IS THERE A POSSIBILITY OF A SEQUEL FEATURING OTHER ARTISTS OF THE SILVER AGE (DOUG WILDEY, RUSS HEATH AS EXAMPLES)?

AS: I really have no interest to do more on The Silver Age in terms of another book—I've made my Silver Age statement. But I have done, and will continue to do, other Silver Age-themed verbal/visual essays in print form (recently, a 6-page eulogy/retrospective of Joe Kubert, a 16-page Superman-themed "Requiem for Weisinger," and a 4-page "The Origin of Jack Kirby's Black Panther"), and perhaps, collect them in a retrospective book of all of my similar pieces in the future.

SP!: IF YOU WERE TO DO A FOLLOW-UP ON THIS BOOK, COVERING ARTISTS AFTER THE SILVER AGE (BRONZE AGE?), WHICH ARTISTS WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

AS: I've thought about this over the years, and a Great Comic Book Artists of the 1970s book (I dislike the "Bronze Age" moniker, as I believe only "Gold" and "Silver" make sense; everything after sounds ludicrous) would have to contain the following artists, in no particular order: Wrightson, Kaluta, Smith, Chaykin, Simonson, Rogers, Starlin, Gulacy, Russell; there're non-Marvel/DC guys like Corben and Moebius; and what about the Silver Age guys who did career-defining work in the '70s as well: Colan, Kubert, Kane, Kirby, Adams? Ergo, it's TOO BIG a book, and one that I have zero desire to attempt—unless a publisher pays me enough to do it. And I ain't waitin' by the phone for that call!

SP!: DO YOU THINK THE ARTISTS OF THE SILVER AGE ARE MORE REVERED BECAUSE THERE WERE FEWER BIG-TIME WRITERS LIKE STAN LEE AND DENNY O'NEIL VERSUS TODAY, WHERE YOU'VE GOT GRANT MORRISON, NEIL GAIMAN, ED BRUBAKER, MARK MILLAR, ROBERT KIRKLAND, ETC. ETC. MAKING HEADLINES?

AS: Well, there's an element of that, I suppose—but I truly think the real reason is that mainstream superhero comic book art came of age in The Silver Age (1956-70), with all eight artists represented in my book hitting their mature styles during the era, working on characters and stories that

"A CREATURE OF THE NIGHT, BLACK, TERRIBLE...A WEIRD FIGURE OF THE DARK...THIS AVENGER OF EVIL...THE BATMAN!"
— FROM THE 1939 ORIGIN OF BATMAN, WRITTEN BY BILL FINGER
ZUNG
VLIP
"I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO BATMAN THAT WASN'T ALREADY THERE IN A PRIMITIVE FORM," ADAMS SAID. "WHAT I DID WAS SIMPLY REDEFINE HIM. ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS THAT OCCURRED TO ME WAS BATMAN WAS SUPPOSED TO LOOK LIKE A BAT. I HAD BAT PHOTOGRAPHS IN MY REFERENCE FILE AND I LOVED THE WAY BATS FLEW. I LOVED THE WAY BIRDS FLEW. THERE WAS SOMETHING INSPIRATIONAL ABOUT THE WAY THEY FLEW THAT IT WAS CLEAR TO TO ME THAT THIS WAS PART OF WHAT BATMAN WAS ABOUT.
"MONTHS LATER, JULIE SCHWARTZ COMES DOWN THE HALL AT ME WITH LETTERS SAYING THE ONLY BATMAN AT DC COMICS IS IN BRAVE & BOLD, AND ASKS ME, WHAT MAKES ME THINK I KNOW HOW BATMAN OUGHT TO LOOK? I SAID, 'JULIE, IT'S NOT JUST ME WHO KNOWS WHAT BATMAN OUGHT TO BE, IT'S ME AND EVERY KID IN AMERICA. THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO DON'T KNOW WHAT BATMAN OUGHT TO BE ARE THE PEOPLE HERE AT DC COMICS!'"

would define them as Hall of Fame comic book artists.

SP!: NOWADAYS, THERE IS A PREMIUM ON WRITERS (BENDIS, GAIMAN, MORRISON) AND THE ARTIST IS SECONDARY. DISCUSS.

AS: Well, to my eye, there's a sameness these days to the art in the Marvel and DC mainstream superhero product that's not helped by the same slick printing on glossy paper with styleless computer coloring. Not enough original styles stand out, though there are a number of greats working in the field at the same time (Mike Allred, JH Williams III, David Mack, Bill Sienkiewicz, Amy Reeder), so it is a bit of a paradox. But with this ubiquity of similar-looking art, comic book artists are now like the anonymous computer graphics experts behind the look of today's movies, and therefore, the writer/director plays a bigger part in the storytelling process and the eventual publicity/promotion for the project.

But, bottom line, comic book art is still primarily a visual medium first: you have to be drawn (pun intended) to the art first, and then you decide if you want to be the story. Although I suppose that, if now readers are just following the writers, then they've "overridden" their critical faculty concerning the primary visual component of this synchronicitous verbal/visual medium. But I believe that subconsciously/unconsciously, you can't really enjoy reading a comic book if you don't like the art. But great art will make you read a weak story! Or, as Gil Kane himself put it (on the table of contents page in my book): "The only thing that makes comics worth reading is the art."

And the comic book artist's view of the world is what takes you through the comic book reading experience, just as a director's worldview takes you through the movie that he's directed from a screenplay, from words on paper—just as a comic book artist, when collaborating with a writer (or written script/synopsis in any form), has to figure out how to visualize, bring to life, and story-tell a writer's words into a comic book reading experience. I discuss all of this in further detail in my 16-page verbal/visual essay, "The Auteur Theory of Comics" (http://kirbymuseum.org/pubsandmerch/auteurtheory/), that uses the Jack Kirby-Stan Lee conflict over the creation of the Marvel Universe as the foundation of my manifesto—patterned after the 1950s French film critics' Auteur Theory of film—that posits the

"THE THING WAS A TRAGEDY," KIRBY SAID. "CAN YOU IMAGINE YOURSELF AS A MUTATION, NEVER KNOWING WHEN YOU WERE GOING TO CHANGE, AND WHAT YOU'D LOOK LIKE TO YOUR FOLKS OR PEOPLE YOU LOVE?" "EVERYBODY SEEMED TO ASSOCIATE ME WITH THE THING BECAUSE HE ACTED LIKE A REGULAR GUY.
"NO MATTER WHAT HE LOOKED LIKE, THE THING NEVER CHANGED HIS PERSONALITY -- HE WAS ALWAYS A HUMAN BEING, DESPITE HIS PHYSICAL CHANGE. BEN GRIMM ALWAYS REMAINED BEN GRIMM. I THINK THAT'S WHY THE READER LIKED HIM, THAT TOUCH OF REALITY." "I SUPPOSE I MUST BE A LOT LIKE BEN GRIMM."
LEFT TO RIGHT: the geological development of The Thing's appearance: Issue #2, Nov. 1961, inked by Dick Ayers. Issue #15, June '63, inked by Ayers. Issue #37, Apr. '65, inked by Chic Stone.
BACKGROUND: Issue #40, July '65, the debut of The Thing's definitive rock-look, inked by Vince Colletta.
BOTTOM: Cover & splash page, Issue #51, June '66, inked by Joe Sinnott, the consensus single most impactful Lee/Kirby story of the Silver Age.
BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Issue #45, Dec. '65, and Issue #48, Mar. '66, both inked by Joe Sinnott. With a limited facial palette of stone, Kirby nevertheless provided The Thing with a subtle range of emotions, aided by the inks of Sinnott, considered by many Kirby's greatest inker. "He was the greatest comic book inker of all time, and I was able to do as much work with him," Sinnott said. "To be associated with him, to be a part of his art, is compensation enough for me. I couldn't ask for anything more."
IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!
THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
Fantastic Four
51
JUNE
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
12¢
THIS MAN... THIS MONSTER!
THE FABULOUS F.F. MUST SOLVE THE TERRIBLE RIDDLE OF:
THIS MAN... THIS MONSTER!
STAN LEE
JACK KIRBY
JOE SINNOTT
ARTIE SIMEK

comic book artist as the auteur of the comic book reading experience, whether he works from an old-school full script, a synopsis, a phone call chat, or one of Alan Moore's 26-page exegeses for one panel.

SP!: WHICH OLD-SCHOOL ARTISTS ARE STILL PRODUCING OR SURPASSING THE WORK OF THEIR GLORY DAYS?

AS: Walt Simonson absolutely comes to mind (have you seen his new Ragnarok for IDW?); Chaykin still does work as slick as his '70s–'80s works, as do Kaluta and Paul Gulacy; Craig Russell is still in peak form; Crumb's Book of Genesis was spectacular; whenever Steranko surprises us with new work, it's still of the highest pedigree (his interstitial chapter title page designs in the IDW SHIELD Artist's Edition were worth the price of admission), and remember, Kubert was doing great work right up until he passed in 2012, as was Eisner the year he passed, 2005.

SP!: IT SEEMS THE DAYS OF AN ARTIST DOING A LONG RUN ON A TITLE ARE PRETTY MUCH THE EXCEPTION, VERSUS THE RULE. WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS ON THIS? DO YOU SEE IT DAMAGING COMICS IN THE FUTURE?

AS: Comic book art is hard effing work; unless you've actually drawn pages, especially in a realistic style, you have no idea how difficult they are. But they're read in a fraction of the time it took to create them, and they're published in a medium whose very periodical, monthly nature works against being physically able to do them on a monthly basis, much less survive on the relatively low pay—if you get paid at all to do comics. So, God bless all those comic book artists out there who CAN manage the monthly gig and do consecutive issues of ANY length—they'll keep "the industry" afloat.

The art form? Words and pictures have been with us as the human race since Egyptian hieroglyphics, with their sequential images and corresponding cuneiform "text." Before those, we had cave paintings, sequential graphic images telling a story, with the "verbal" probably coming from the original cave painters, "explaining" the images to their clans.

And what is everything online except combinations of words and images? So the verbal/visual aspect of comic book art, whether in print or digital/"motion comic" form, is here to stay and will bring us into the future. It's the most human-accessible art form of all!

SP! WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL OPINION OF THE ART CURRENTLY PRODUCED BY THE MAJOR PUBLISHERS?

AS: I don't read much of the mainstream Marvel/DC material these days—superheroes have to be deconstructed for me in order to get my attention—except if it's done by artists whom I love, like the aforementioned Mike Allred on Silver Surfer, Amy Reeder on Rocket Girl, and J.H. Williams III on whatever he's doing. I still follow all the great independent guys, like (off the top o' me head) Jaime Hernandez (Love & Rockets), Charles Burns, Chris Ware, Dan Clowes, Peter Bagge, Adrian Tomine, Jessica Abel, Dean Haspiel, and others—like the still-prolific and profound Robert Crumb!

SP!: WILL BRONZE AGE HOLD A CANDLE TO THE SILVER AGE? WHY OR WHY NOT?

AS: The Silver Age artists of the 1960s in my book are like the '60s rock stars—Dylan, The Beatles, The Stones, The Who, The Doors, Led Zeppelin, Hendrix, et al—the high-water marks of the art form that all subsequent rock-and-rollers are measured against. So as great as the comic book artists of the subsequent decade were, and are, they can never surpass the art and achievements of The Silver Age artists in my book. They're the models, like Jack Kirby, our modern Michelangelo, at whose altar many of today's most successful comic book artists, like Jim Lee, Todd McFarlane, George Perez and John Byrne, prayed.

SP!: WHERE DO YOU SEE THE ART FORM GOING TEN YEARS FROM NOW?

AS: It's bittersweetly ironic that, when I was growing up (and speaking in grossly general terms), the mainstream superhero comics were great—but there were no hardcover, deluxe, archival reprints of the classic comic book and comic strip material. Now the mainstream superhero comics aren't that great, but man, the archival reprint collections are incredible—not to mention things like the awesome IDW Artist Editions, reprinting original art in facsimile editions, which we would've DIED to have back in the day!

But overall, it's also bittersweetly ironic that, while the superhero movies are making billions of dollars, and comics' influence on the wider culture is greater than it's ever been, the actual readership of comics and their sales are lower than they've EVER been; comics that would've been cancelled because of low sales then would be bestsellers now. There are many reasons for this, too many to enumerate here, but suffice it to say they're like a line of dominoes—one reason impacts and affects another.

But, see my previous answer (above) to "where I see the future of the art form."

SP!: FINALLY, HERE'S A LIST OF OTHER WORK BY ARLEN SCHUMER.

Arlen's other books:

Visions From The Twilight Zone

(http://www.amazon.com/Visions-Twilight Zone-Arlen-Schumer/dp/0877017255) and The Neal Adams Sketchbook (http://www.amazon.com/Neal-Adams-Sketchbook-HC/dp/1887591052/ref=tmm_hrd_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&sr=8-1&qid=1400349408),

Arlen lectures at universities and cultural institutions across the country

(http://www.arlenschumer.com/visualectures), most recently at the Art on A Gallery in NYC: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcxKWTMFpSY&list=UUwkw6QB6OFKcfxK17macOlQ

Profile in The Huffington Post: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/hendrie-weisinger/arlene-schumer-coveration_b_2686701.html?utm_hp_ref=fb&src=sp&comm_ref=false#sb=2033594b=facebook

Appearance on AMC-TV's "Comic Book Men":http://www.amctv.com/comic-book-men/videos/extended-scene-episode-105-golden-age-comics-comic-book-men

"Finding Your Inner Superhero" custom superhero portraiture: http://www.workbook.com/blog/1556

Auteur Theory of Comics 16-pg verbal/visual essay: http://kirbymuseum.org/pubsandmerch/auteurtheory/

Superman/Weisinger 16-pg verbal/visual essay: http://comicsbulletin.com/columns/4826/can-mort-weisinger-be-redeemed/

Bruce Springsteen works:http://www.arlenschumer.com/springsteen/unlucky-13

Twilight Zone works:http://www.paleycenter.org/the-twilight-zone-forever/

www.youtube.com/arlen6658

https://twitter.com/arlenschumer

https://www.facebook.com/arlen.schumer

Neal Adams Almanack Facebook group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/326921490741151/

Great Things Brewing at Action Lab

Jamal Igle

By Ellen Fleischer

In the less than five years that Action Lab Entertainment (ALE) has been on the scene, they have earned a reputation for smartly-written, well-drawn comics that reach out to all ages in a variety of genres. From Fracture and The F1rst Hero to Molly Danger and the two-time Eisner-nominated and five-time Glyph-nominated Princeless, ALE books are attracting accolades and critical acclaim. This month, SP! sat down with Jamal Igle, ALE's co-director of Marketing and Publicity. Jamal has worked as a storyboard artist for Sony Animation (Max Steel, Roughnecks: Starship Troopers Chronicles). His Marvel credits include New Warriors and Iron/Fist Wolverine, and his DC credits include Firestorm and Nightwing. He is the creator of Molly Danger, currently published by Action Lab. Here, he talks with us about ALE's origin, offerings, and processes.

SP!: WHO ARE THE PEOPLE BEHIND ACTION LAB? HOW DID YOU ALL COME TOGETHER? (OR, TO PUT IT A DIFFERENT WAY, WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO UNITE "A GROUP OF MAD SCIENTISTS WHO COLLECTIVELY HAVE OVER 25 YEARS OF COMIC BOOK CREATING EXPERIENCE"?)

JI: Action Lab Entertainment was originally formed in 2010 by Chad Cicconi, Dave Dwonch, Shawn Pryor, and Shawn Gabborin. They were all friends and had been attending shows together, each one self-publishing their own books and feeling frustrated by their places in the industry. Pryor had a publishing company called PKD Media, Gabborin published through his company Angry Gnome Comics, and both had a bit of success on their own. Chad and Dave had both done work for those companies and decided they wanted to do a project together. The first book they produced was the first issue of our flagship title, Fracture, which was funded through Kickstarter.

After the success of Fracture, they decided to make a real go of it, bringing on Bryan Seaton as publisher. Later, Kevin Freeman (former managing editor of APE Entertainment) came on board as Action Lab president, Jason Martin (publisher of Super Real Graphics) as president of Action Lab: Danger Zone, our mature readers imprint. Kelly Dale, our other marketing director came on at the same time I did, a year ago.

OKAY, NO PROB, BUDDY.
SINCE YER SO VOCAL, HOW 'BOUT A MINUTE OF YOUR TIME?
NO! STAY AWAY!
HEY!
SHUFF! SPUFF! NO! I DIDN'T DO NOTHIN'!
C'MON, I JUST NEED TO TALK, PAL!
TAKE IT EASY, BROTHER. I'LL BUY YA A CUP OF COFFEE OR SOMETHING.
ERRRAGH!
WHOA! CALM DOWN! I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO HURT CHA!

ALMOST
AND AGAIN, SCOTT'S MOM AND I ARE REAL GRATEFUL YOU'RE DOING THIS
HEY MR WINTROSKI IS SCOTTY READY?
SCOTT! YOU BETTER GET A MOVE ON OR YOU'RE GOING TO BE LATE!
ARE YOU COMING DOWN?
IN A MINUTE!

MARY ... MUTHA ... OF ...
FUCK!
SANTA'S OVERDOSED!
QUICK, TYRONE.
I SEE ABSOLUTELY NO OTHER WAY TO ASSIST SANTA IN THIS EMERGENCY SITUATION ...
THAN TO SHOVE THIS SYRINGE FULL OF ADRENALINE STRAIGHT INTO HIS HEART!

SP!: HOW DID YOU FIRST COME ON BOARD?

JI: I actually backed the Fracture Kickstarter. Wait… I'm getting ahead of myself. I met Shawn Pryor at a convention back in 2008 or 2009, he interviewed me for his podcast, and we became friends. I met the rest of the guys at various points over the years, so I knew almost everyone involved. When I was going to launch Molly Danger, I decided to go to Action Lab, because I could see they had something going on in terms of quality and presentation. Last year, having worked with the guys and gone to shows and spent time with them, I basically volunteered for the position. SP! You've got a diverse catalogue, one which spans various genres. A quick look at your website reveals offerings in SF, Fantasy, Superhero Adventure, Crime Drama and Mystery; and a range from "all ages" through to "mature readers only". What is Action Lab looking for when you decide whether to accept a title for publication?

JI: We have a publishing committee that votes on every book, so it's not just one person making the decision of what gets published. We have to feel like a project is something the majority of the group can get behind. It's a great process because our tastes are so divergent that, while not every project has a 100 percent quorum behind it, there's enough of a consensus that we usually do really well with the project. As far as subject matter, we're open to anything, as long as we feel it's a book we can get behind.

SP!: ANY "DO'S AND DON'TS" FOR PEOPLE HOPING TO GET PUBLISHED WITH YOU?

JI: You have to come prepared, with a creative team in place. We want to see a pitch, a script sample, and at least five to six pages of completed artwork. Since ALE primarily deals with creator-owned books, we're not really set up to play matchmaker between creators. You can find all our submission guidelines on the company website.

SP!: SEVERAL ACTION LAB TITLES (EXAMPLES: MOLLY DANGER, MIDNIGHT TIGER) WERE INITIALLY SOURCED THROUGH CROWDFUNDING. WHAT DOES ACTION LAB PROVIDE TO CREATORS WHO APPROACH YOU WITH THE INITIAL FUNDING ALREADY SECURED?

JI: Infrastructure and distribution are the biggest pluses. We eliminate a lot of the headaches involved with self-publishing. Once a book joins ALE, we give it as much attention as possible in terms of production and promotion. We also offer one

of the best deals of any competing publisher. We will represent your property for other media if you don't already have representation.

SP!: WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT YOUR CURRENT OFFERINGS?

JI: We're currently publishing eight to twelve miniseries and ongoing projects, like Zombie Tramp, which is about a former call girl turned Zombie with magical powers and a desire to get her old life back. The F1rst Hero, by Anthony Ruttgaizer and Phillip Sevy, is about a man who gains superpowers and struggles to maintain his sanity in a world where every one who gets them goes insane. Itty Bitty Bunnies in Rainbow Pixie Candy Land is about a pair of foul-mouthed, drug-addled bunny rabbits. Midnight Tiger is about a young black man who receives superpowers after a blood transfusion, and decides to join the ranks of the superhero set. Skyward, by Jeremy Dale, is about a young boy and his dog caught in a civil war between the man who murdered his father and his newfound friends. Southern Dog, by Jeremy Holt, is about a boy who becomes a werewolf in a very racist southern community that hates anything that's different.

We have an extremely large library that includes books like Bo, Plushy gangsta, the tale of a former gangbanger who is transformed into a talking teddy bear, and Jack Hammer, a former super-powered prize fighter turned private eye.

SP!: WHAT'S NEXT ON THE HORIZON? ANY FORTHCOMING TITLES YOU'D LIKE TO DISCUSS?

JI: We have a slate of great books like Fight Like a Girl, about a girl who wants to save her brother's life and must go through trial by combat to gain one magic wish; Herald: Lovecraft and Tesla, a team-up between Nicola Tesla and HP Lovecraft; Holy F*CK which basically sounds like the beginning of a dirty joke: Jesus, the Devil and a nun meet in a seedy bar...

SP!: YOUR BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE BOTH IN PRINT AND DIGITALLY. HAVE YOU ENCOUNTERED ANY CHALLENGES WITH EITHER MEDIUM?

JI: A few. A lot of it, initially, was due to the bulk of our books being produced for Comixology Guided View technology, which takes time. We've streamlined the process a bit.

SP!: HOW ARE YOU CURRENTLY PROMOTING YOUR TITLES? HOW EASY HAS IT BEEN TO GET YOUR PRODUCTS OUT THERE AND ON THE CONSUMERS' RADAR?

JI: A lot of it is old-fashioned word-of-mouth. I prep PDF copies for reviewers and reporters. I write a lot of press releases now, lol. We hit a lot of conventions, as well. We do whatever we can to get the books in front of potential readers and it seems to be working. In the last year, our sales have increased 150 percent and we're in the top 20 in terms of market share and sales in the comics industry. Which is impressive for a company that started out four years ago as a grassroots endeavor and has built up its reputation entirely on the strength of their product.

SP!: HOW CAN PEOPLE OBTAIN COPIES OF YOUR BOOKS?

JI: We're available through Diamond Distribution, primarily. However, you can find our titles on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Wal-Mart, and other websites.

SP!: HOW CAN WE KEEP UP WITH WHAT'S GOING ON?

JI: We're online at ww.ActionLabcomics.com, on Facebook as Action Lab Entertainment and Action Lab Danger Zone, and on Twitter as @ActionLab and @ActionLabDanger.

SP!: Thanks so much!

Not long before we went to press, we were saddened to learn of the passing of Skyward Creator Jeremy Dale. He will be missed.

Barking About Dog Eaters
Malcolm Wong

By Louise Cochran-Mason

Baltimore-born Malcolm Wong is a writer, music video director, sculptor, and producer (with Cross World Connections). He is also a minority owner of Sea Lion Books. He currently lives in Japan.

His dystopian Dog Eaters started life as a screenplay, but after winning the Creative Screen-writing prize at the 2006 Screenwriter's Expo 5, it was adapted into a six-issue comic book series (and later a graphic novel). The series worked its way through several publishers to arrive at its current self-published form.

He is currently working to raise Dog Eaters' profile and raise funds to continue its second printing. He also makes videos and music to help promote the series.

SP!: WHAT IS DOG EATERS ABOUT?

MW: This is a story set 175 years after the Die Off in the American Southwest. The surviving human population consists of scattered nomadic tribes, isolated casino cities, and roving swarms of predatory bandits. The Black Dog Clan is making its way down the trade route between the casino cities, to the Gulf, where they will establish their own trading centre.

SP!: WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND?

MW: I'm Chinese-American with some British blood. My family on both sides immigrated to North America (Victoria, California, Boston) one hundred years ago. I grew up on the East Coast, graduated from high school in the Greater Boston area, and then spent formative years in Hilo and Honolulu before moving to Osaka and then Tokyo. I have an MFA in sculpture, am in the Honolulu Museum of Art and Contemporary Art Center collections, and I've won awards in film-making and screen-writing.

SP!: WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO SELF-PUBLISH DOG EATERS?

MW: Dog Eaters won the Dabel Brothers Award (also the best action/adventure script) at ScreenwritingExpo5. This award meant that they would adapt and publish Dog Eaters as a comic series and graphic novel. The Dabel Brothers got on the indie publishing map with the "Hedge Knight," a prequel to George R.R. Martin's "Game of Thrones."

At that time, the Dabel Brothers were riding high, but they had a history of jumping from one publishing partner to another, almost one a year, starting with Image, moving on to Devil's Due, Alias, and Red Eagle, before going completely on their own at the time they awarded me the Dabel Brothers Award for Dog Eaters. Shortly after, they signed a deal with Marvel. The first two issues of Dog Eaters were published before the Dabel Brothers and Marvel "mutually agreed" to part ways. It seemed that DB was dead, but again demonstrating their Lazarus-like powers, they came back, striking a deal with Del Rey, an imprint of Random House, which extended their amazing pinballing journey from one major publisher to the next. With the promise of Dog Eaters being a Del Rey graphic novel release, things never looked better. Issue Three came out. Then there was yet another change. The Del Rey relationship was terminated. The rights to the Dabel Brothers licensed properties were sold to Dynamite Entertainment.

It was at that time that David Dabel, one of the younger brothers not affiliated with Dabel Brothers, established Sea Lion Books. At this time, the 200-page graphic novel was completed and published. And then Sea Lion Books went under.

But I'm determined to see this through—damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!

SP!: DID YOU MANAGE TO RETAIN FULL OWNERSHIP OF DOG EATERS?

MW: Yes, I have kept full ownership since Guillermo Angel submitted the first ten pages of pencils and Dabel Brothers didn't respond to his invoices. When that happened, I took on the production of Dog Eaters and covered the bills.

The publisher deals and partnerships only covered the licensed properties, like Orson Scott Card's Red Prophet: The Tales of Alvin Maker, Raymond E. Feist's Magician, Laurell K. Hamilton's Anita Blake: Vampire Hunter, and a few others.

Dog Eaters was sort of like an adopted step-child. And yet, Dog Eaters stayed with them through all the changes until Sea Lion Books. Now I hear that Les Dabel is trying to get Dabel Brothers back up and running.

Riding with these guys is like being on the historic wooden roller coaster, the Coney Island Cyclone—you don't know if you're going to fly off the tracks or the whole thing is going to collapse.

SP!: DOES THE DOG EATERS WEBSITE DOUBLE AS YOUR PERSONAL BLOG/WEBSITE?

MW: The Dogeaters-manga.com website is basically the journey of Dog Eaters and everything that tags along with it.

SP!: WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO RUN A CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN? WHAT MADE YOU CHOOSE PATREON OVER THE OTHER CROWD-FUNDING SITES?

MW: I'm trying to raise money for the second printing and was steered to Patreon by Tim Mann, who taught me the basics of aquaponics, which I am getting into now. http://dogeaters-manga.com/index.php?s=aquaponics

Tim and his wife Susanne Friend run Friendly Aquaponics in Honokaa, HI. Susanne is currently serving a three-month sentence—Tim will serve his three months beginning in January 2015—for growing two hundred marijuana plants for Roger Christie, founder of The Hawaii Cannabis (THC) Ministry. Apparently, Roger Christie was selling weed and calling it sacrament for ten years, before the authorities made any arrests. Of course, now the climate for cannabis is much looser...

After posting on Patreon, I was messaged by an "inspirational" video maker and I realized that Patreon is a sort of running pledge that can go on indefinitely and can even give you a monthly income. I'm not sure that this particular crowdfunding site is for me and I'm thinking of closing it. Maybe Kickstarter is better. I've funded a few projects: animation, short films, and also a GoFundMe for an old friend with cancer who needs money for alternative treatments. Yeah, I don't think this particular one is good for my intent. But say you're in the midst of doing a serial and you want to get paid by the issue? That might be good.

SP!: WHAT TITLES DO YOU HAVE PLANNED FOR THE FUTURE?

MW: I have several completed stories. One I'm really excited about

is "The Transmutant." This is a story set in a near-future America that has been Balkanized into Islamic States. A charismatic leader is beheaded and re-animated to be used to consolidate power by the reigning secular leader.

Another is "Flywheel." This is a story of a billionaire tech CEO who creates a self-sustaining, self-sufficient community in a rust-bucket city. Then shadowy third-party government contractors conspire to take over its assets.

I've also written "Eden's Serpent." After the Radio Flash (EMP or electro-magnetic pulse from a nuclear bomb) destroys most of the world's electronics, a gelded Tech Ninja must regain his manhood and escape from the matriarchal society in Bolivia that has captured him with the codes to utilize his country's computer chips so that man can rise again.

So you see, I have pre and post-apocalyptic visions…

SP!: WHAT EFFECT HAS ADVANCING TECHNOLOGY HAD ON THE INDUSTRY?

MW: The internet is really changing every aspect of life and entertainment is no exception. There are no platinum-selling albums in 2014—this may be a first. Recorded music is basically free. Or worthless, depending on how you view it. Tech companies, like Apple, Pandora, Spotify, etc have basically destroyed the royalty model. Movies are downloaded and streamed for free. Bookstores are increasingly rare. On Maui, you can't get a new hardcover book unless you go to Costco or Lahaina. As for comics and graphic novels, I think that the art looks great on an iPad, but then again, I like to be able to hold something analog in my hands.

Smart phones have taken over what free space we had in our minds. Ultimately, I don't see this going to a good place. But we'll see.

SP!: Do you think the internet has made it easier for independent publishers to publish, and distribute themselves?
MW: Both easier and harder. Easier in that everyone can do it. Harder for the same reason. It's so hard to break through the clutter. There are no gatekeepers anymore. No quality control.

SP!: HOW DO YOU MARKET YOUR COMICS?

MW: I'm hoping you'll help!

SP!: WILL YOU BE ATTENDING ANY UPCOMING CONVENTIONS?

MW: I hope to!

SP!: DO YOU THINK THE NUMBER OF SELF-PUBLISHED COMICS, PRINT-ON-DEMAND COMICS, DIGITAL COMICS AND WEBCOMICS MAKES IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR INDIVIDUAL CREATORS AND INDEPENDENT PUBLISHERS TO PROMOTE AND MARKET THEIR WORK?

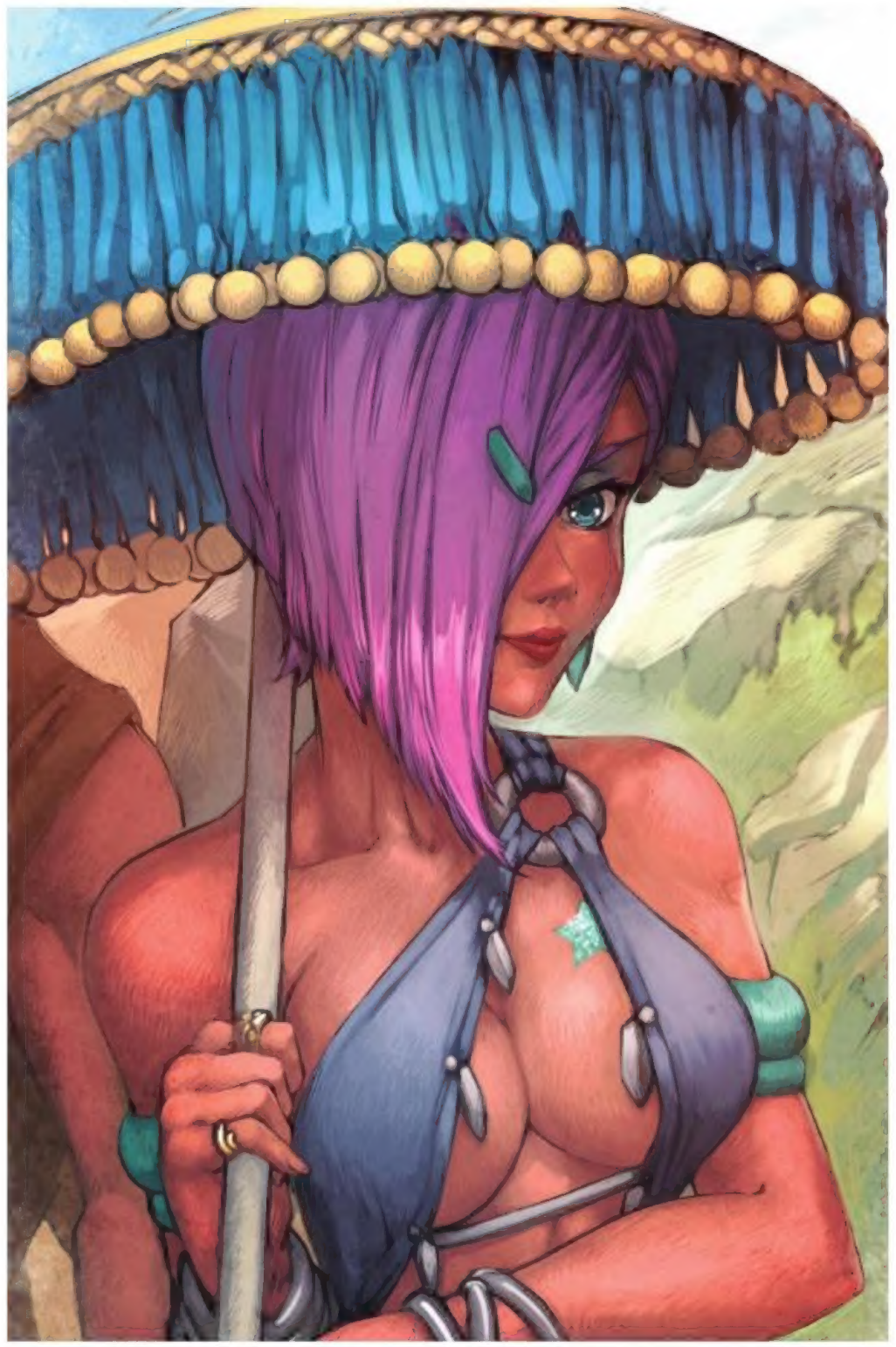
MW: There is definitely more to choose from. Marketing is really important. Even for high-profile movies with big stars, about the same amount of money is spent on promotion and marketing as for the actual production. It's hard, even for them.

SP!: DO YOU ACCEPT SUBMISSIONS FROM CREATORS?

MW: At the moment, I'm not in the position to publish anyone besides myself. If, by "creators," you mean artists, I have commissioned ink work from artists for screen-prints and t-shirts.

SP!: WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES?

MW: I write and record music <https://soundcloud.com/cloud-hands-project/sets>. I blow glass once a week <http://dogeaters-manga.com/index.php?s=glass>. I am doing aquaponics



<http://dogeaters-manga.com/index.php?s=aquaponics>, which could be called a hobby, but it is actually in preparation for the end of the world! I shoot and edit video <http://dogeaters-manga.com/index.php?s=group+a>.

Weblinks:

https://www.facebook.com/DogEatersComic

http://dogeaters-manga.com/

http://vimeo.com/user10956870

http://sealionbooks.com/titles/dogeaters

http://www.patreon.com/dogeaters

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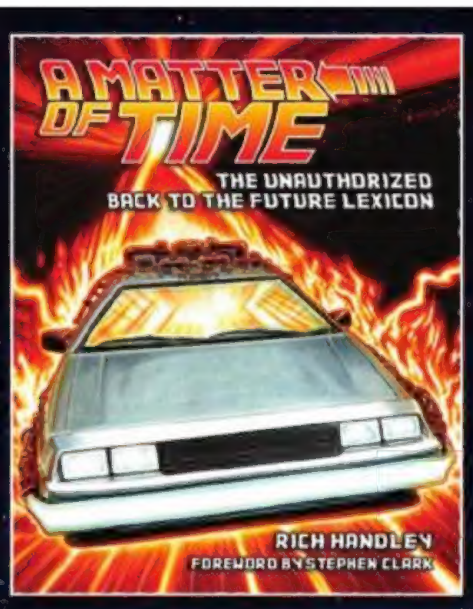

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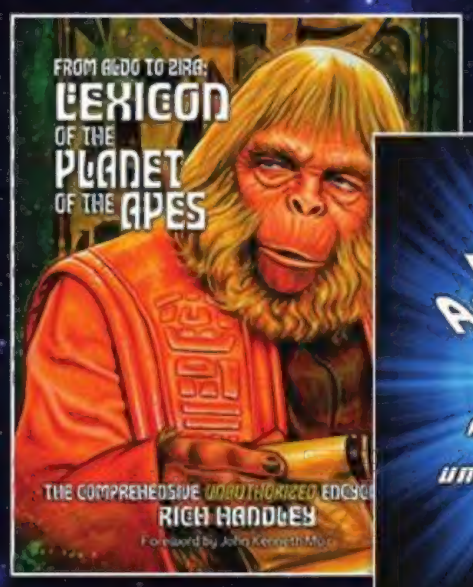

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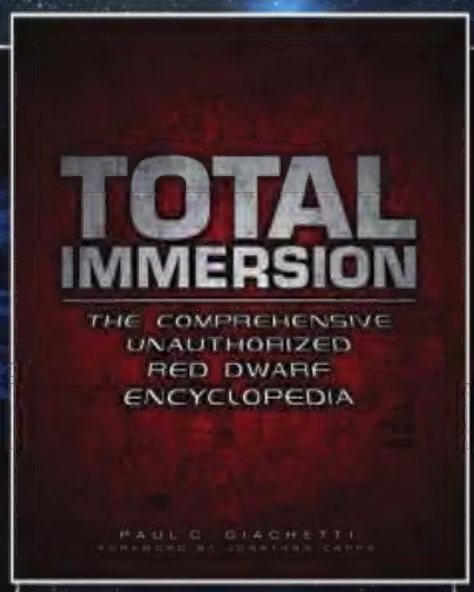
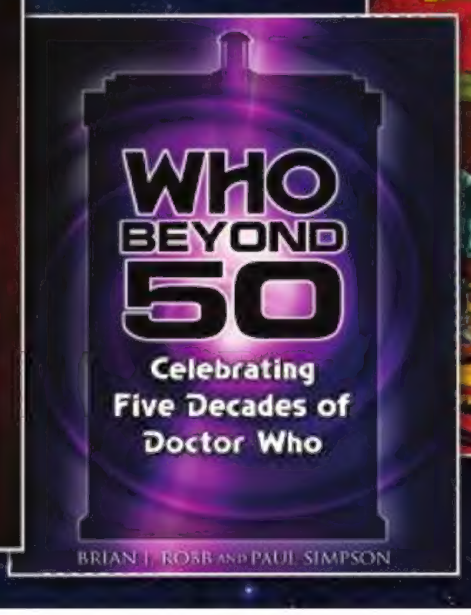
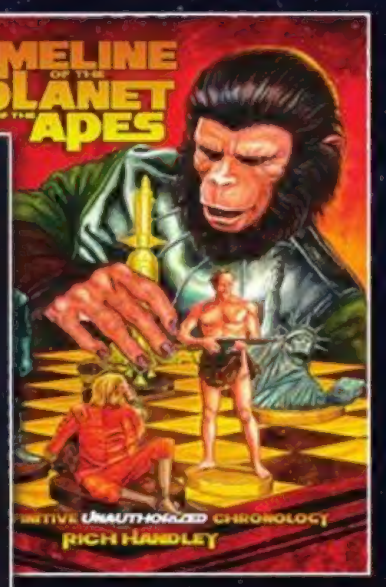
MATTHEW J ELLIOTT
FOREWORD BY ALAN BARNES







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